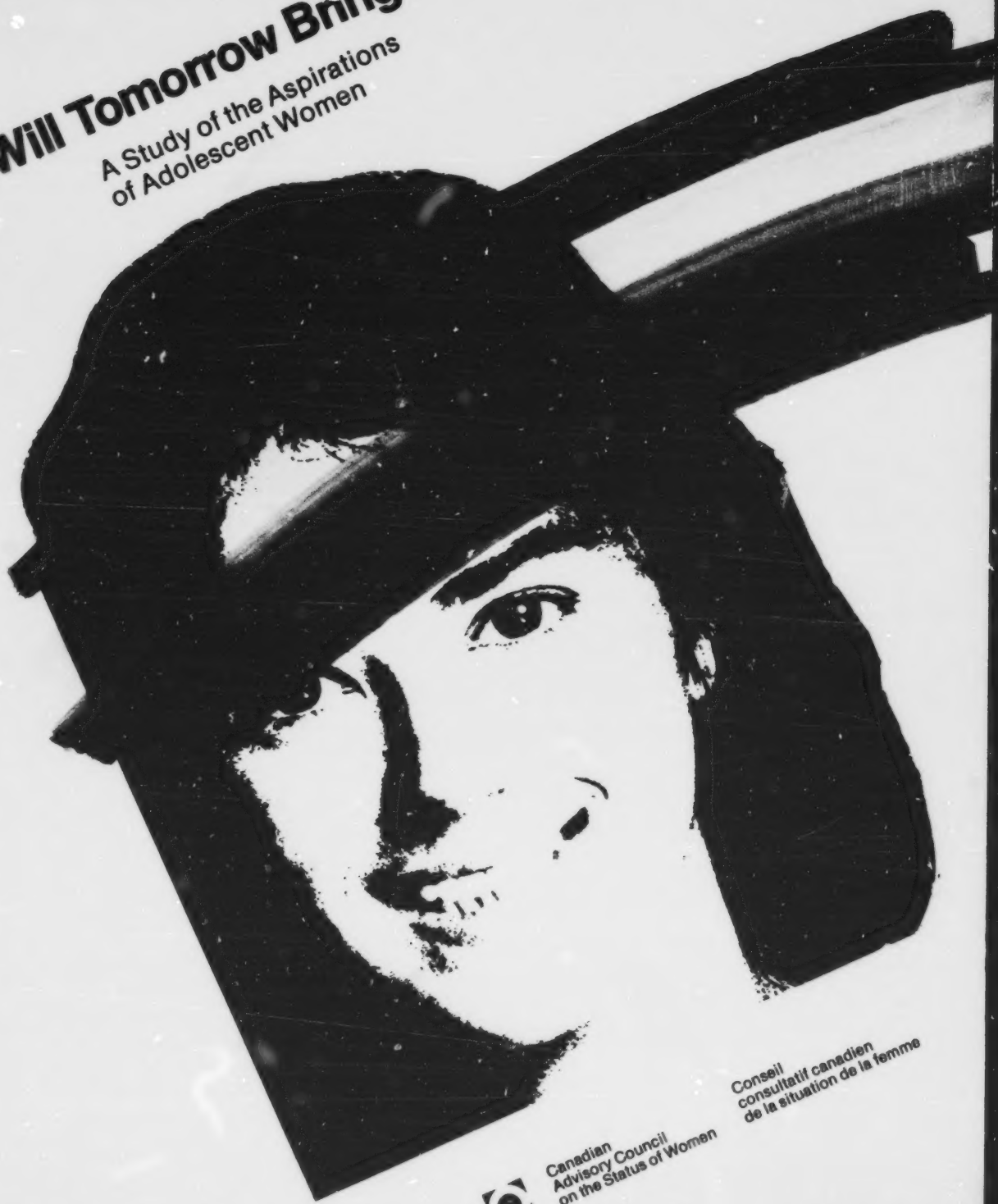
"What Will Tomorrow Bring? . . ."

A Study of the Aspirations of Adolescent Women



Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women

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"WHAT WILL TOMORROW BRING? . . ."

A Study of the Aspirations of Adolescent Women

by

Maureen Baker

March 1985

CANADIAN ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

> "It wouldn't take long for a Third World War to end. Depending on where I was, hopefully I'd get completely vapourized!"
>
> Jean: 15 years old, Vancouver

A. The Changing World for Adolescents

For the present generation of Canadian adolescents, the world is a complex place in which to grow up. Although their parents' and grandparents' generations may have survived the Depression and world wars, today's adolescents are experiencing changing moral and sexual standards, profound changes in family structure, and difficult choices in values and lifestyle. With drugs readily available in the schools, sex and violence graphically displayed on the television set, bleak employment prospects, and the threat of nuclear destruction, Canadian teenagers are expected to make prudent choices about their future lives. They are expected to rely on adults for advice – adults raised in a society considerably different from that of the present. Are adolescents being adequately prepared for the future of the 1980s or the year 2000?

These issues exist for all adolescents. With its mandate to inform and advise the public and the government on issues of concern to women, however, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women is focusing primarily on adolescent girls because they are the women of tomorrow. How informed they are about educational requirements, labour force trends, and changing family patterns will influence their decisions about their future lives. Awareness of the cross-pressures of changing marital and occupational roles will be an important factor in the preparations they make today for their future security.

The Council is particularly concerned that whatever girls choose, they do so with as much information and preparation as possible. Their education should prepare them for their future lives, which may include both child care and paid work. Girls need to be aware that the labour force is segregated on the basis of

sex, that the work women do often pays less, and that special plans must be made to avoid becoming ghettoized into certain types of work considered appropriate for women. Those women who prefer to stay home with their children will very likely need to work for pay at some point in their lives, and planning for this eventuality is essential. Effective guidance and counselling services may be needed to encourage more awareness in adolescent women of the increasing numbers of one-parent families, the rising costs of child-rearing, the higher unemployment rates for adult women compared to adult men, and technological changes which may affect women's paid work in the future. In other words, we may need to present adolescent girls with a more realistic view of their potential futures.

In the 1980s, more adolescents are going to college and university than they were a few generations ago. More formal schooling is now needed to find a job. However, rising university entrance requirements make it harder to get into university, and high youth unemployment rates make it more difficult to find work than was the case twenty years ago.

In the past twenty years, an increasing number of females have enrolled in college and university. Although 38.5% of students enrolled in post-secondary institutes in 1961 were female, the rate has risen to 51% in 1982-83.[1] However, this has not had a significant impact on women's efforts to achieve equality with men in the work force. Women are still less likely than men to enrol in those courses and programs leading to highly paid jobs. Instead, they focus on or are channelled into courses which interest them but do not necessarily lead to paid work. In addition, young women are concentrated in courses which lead to jobs which women have traditionally done for lower pay, including clerical work, nursing, and social service work. Although more women are now branching out into pharmacy, veterinary medicine, computer science, law, and medicine, most women remain in programs which do not lead them to financial independence. While married women have often been able to rely on their husbands to support them in the past, more women are now finding that they have to support themselves and their children.

The rising rates of divorce and the high probability of women spending at least a part of their lives as single parents are becoming more evident.[2] Many

young people have experienced separation and divorce in their own families or in their friends' families. The new family patterns and division of labour necessitated by separation and divorce are providing unique models for young people. Will these role models encourage young women to plan more carefully for the possibility of being a single parent themselves, or can they not imagine it happening to them? Will their experience with divorce heighten their own desires to have a happy marriage or will they be inclined to expect to live much of their lives outside of a permanent relationship?

Despite the fact that the media is full of articles on career women, many academic studies have indicated that adolescent girls still see their lives in very traditional and romanticized terms.[3] Although most girls are aware that they will have to stay in school longer and prepare for paid work upon graduation, girls are less likely than boys to make explicit plans for their future paid careers. Studies of the 1950s and 1960s indicated that girls thought in terms of temporary jobs, while boys planned for life-long careers. More recent studies have suggested that adolescent girls still plan to stay home with their children until the last child is in school, even though they also expect to have paid employment.[4]

Although girls generally do better than boys through elementary school and their earlier grades of secondary school, when they reach their teen years they become less interested in competing with boys for high grades. Girls often lose interest in mathematics and science, but continue to receive higher grades than boys in languages and literature.[5] Their confidence in their academic ability wanes at the time boys' confidence rises.

Much concern has been expressed over the pattern which North American girls have displayed in dropping high school courses in mathematics and the physical sciences. Since these courses are prerequisites for many college and university programs leading to lucrative careers, girls are closing off their options through these early course decisions.[6] Programs in computer programming, applied science, medicine, and engineering all require a science background.

Research also indicates that the career aspirations of adolescent girls sometimes decline as they reach the latter years of their formal education.[7]

Throughout their formal schooling, adolescent girls receive the subtle message that certain courses or future jobs are inappropriate for women, and they modify their plans to fit in with society's norms. If they express an interest in becoming a medical doctor in the early years of high school, they may eventually decide to become a laboratory technician. Career aspirations may fade as other factors become more primary in their lives. Towards the end of high school, girls often play down their intellectual abilities and focus instead on popularity and finding a boyfriend. While male students concentrate on putting more effort into getting into university or establishing themselves in a trade, female students are dreaming of marriage. The heavy emphasis on appearance and relationships channels girls' energies away from career planning at the very time it is most important.

Women's magazines, television programs, and advertising all promote the idea that physical appearance and alluring sexuality are the most important aspects of a young woman's life. While women's magazines now contain articles on working mothers, day care, and financial planning, these features are frequently situated among advertisements for lip gloss, mascara, panty hose, and hair colouring. The message is a mixed one for the adolescent girl, especially in the types of magazines which most of them read.

While the adolescent culture is oriented to youth, sexuality, and social relationships, the expectations and realities for adult women are quite different. Most adult women must have paid jobs in addition to raising children and doing housework. Single parents and older women often have great difficulty making do on insufficient money to support themselves. Low wages for their paid work, lack of financial independence from men, insufficient financial compensation after divorce, and inadequate pensions lead to poverty for many women over 65 years of age. In 1982, an estimated 60.4% of unattached women 65 years and over were living below the poverty line, compared to 48.9% of unattached elderly men. The mean income of women 65 years and over was $6,440, while the mean income of men in the same age group was $9,349.[8] The extent of poverty among older women suggests that we have not adequately prepared women to be financially independent in the past. Are we still perpetuating this pattern?

B. Rationale of the Study

Because the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women is concerned that adolescent girls are not adequately being prepared, or preparing themselves for a changing world, a research project was planned to study in more detail the goals which Canadian adolescent women have for the future and the plans and actions which they may or may not make in relation to these goals. A comparison was made with a smaller group of males. Since much of the research on adolescents deals with the occupational aspirations of students, we decided to design a broader study to include the plans adolescents have for their education, their work (paid and unpaid), and their relationships. We interviewed 122 girls and 28 boys who were 15 to 19 years old to obtain a more general picture of the hopes and priorities of adolescent women as well as an accurate picture of their present lives.

C. How the Study was Done

In order to see how Canadian adolescents in different situations and circumstances viewed their personal futures and acted in relation to their goals and plans (or lack of them), a detailed questionnaire was designed. They were asked for information on their present lives, their educational plans, the work they expected to do, and how they would organize their personal lives. It is not easy to imagine the future when you are an adolescent, and to make the task easier we encouraged them to tell us what they thought they would be doing in two years and in five years. After asking them to describe the activities of a typical weekday in their present lives, we then asked them to go through a typical weekday at the age of thirty, telling us what they thought they might be doing from the time they got up in the morning until the time they went to bed. Research has shown that this is a fruitful way to help young people to be more specific than they might otherwise be, but still give them plenty of room for their own thoughts and imagination. This has been called the "futures diary approach".[9] Through this indirect approach and with some probing, we were able to gain a rich understanding of the priorities of adolescents, their views of what the world might be like in the near future, their knowledge of possible lifestyles, and the preparations they are now making for the

future. We also asked them explicit questions about how they might deal with certain unexpected situations and where they would turn for advice.

Projection into the future can be very difficult for adolescents. While some may not have made any plans, others may believe that no realistic planning can be made considering the element of chance in determining the future. Some adolescents may not have thought about the questions we wanted to ask, while others may lack knowledge of the possible range of life choices or even the conceptual and verbal sophistication to discuss the future.

While most Canadian research on adolescent aspirations has used samples of students only, used mailed questionnaires, and focused on educational and employment plans, we talked directly with the adolescents (usually in their own homes). Students, graduates from high school, and those who had left school before graduation (hereafter known as "school leavers") were included in our study, and we asked about plans for education, work, and the organization of their personal lives.

We decided to focus on 15- to 19-year-olds because we saw these ages as most important for developing choices about school courses which may lock them into a particular career path in the future. During this stage of their lives, they must decide whether to pursue post-secondary education or try to find a job. They are also maturing physically and socially, forming strong emotional and social relationships, and maybe making plans for marriage. However, we also focused on these ages to compare our findings with government labour force statistics and other studies using these age categories.

D. The Adolescents in our Study

One hundred and fifty adolescents were interviewed by four female interviewers from November 1983 until May 1984. We interviewed 122 females and 28 males. We focused on females because the purpose of the study was to see how adolescent girls viewed their future. The boys were interviewed to provide a small-scale comparison group. Adolescents living in urban areas formed the bulk of

the interviews (113) but we also interviewed a smaller number of rural adolescents (37) in each of the five regions covered.

To reflect at least some of the regional variation of Canada, we interviewed adolescents in five provinces: British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. In each province, we chose a major city as well as a rural area. We defined "rural" as a farm area or smaller community with no more than 30,000 people, farther from a large city than a one-hour drive by car. We wanted to interview adolescents who could not on a daily basis easily use the entertainment and educational facilities of a larger urban centre. We interviewed in Vancouver and in a rural area in British Columbia; Winnipeg and a rural area in Manitoba; Toronto, Ottawa, and rural Ontario; Montreal and rural Quebec; and Halifax-Dartmouth and rural Nova Scotia.

In selecting the adolescents to be interviewed, we wanted to choose males and females from each of the five provinces, weighting our numbers to the more heavily populated central Canada. We decided to interview both students and non-students (including high school graduates and school leavers), so we could not rely on the school system alone to find adolescents. In total, 83% of the adolescents were full-time students, and three quarters of these went to public high schools. However, we also included twenty students who went to private, separate, and alternative schools as well as seven who attended CEGEP in Quebec (junior colleges which bridge the gap between high school and university). We made the assumption that university students had already made some major career plans and taken action in preparing for their future, and therefore did not include any in our study.

Adolescents from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds were interviewed. We also included 14 Native adolescents from British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, and adolescents from different immigrant groups in our study. Adolescents from both dominant language groups were included (23 French and 97 English) as well as those from other language groups.

We interviewed adolescents in a variety of circumstances: students living at home with their parents, unemployed adolescents, teen mothers, and those

living away from home and working in the paid labour force. Thus, with guidelines of how many from which groups to interview, we covered a wide range of social and economic circumstances. While our sample was not statistically "random", it provided us with a broad cross-section of adolescents from different parts of the country.

Because we were looking for particular categories of adolescents, our sample was "purposive". To find adolescents to interview, we approached a number of individuals as well as organizations such as schools, YWCAs, church groups, community organizations, social service agencies, youth clubs, and specialized ethnic clubs. After we interviewed these adolescents, we asked them if they could recommend a friend, usually not in that group. In this way, we moved into "snowball sampling". We continually tried to keep within our guidelines for adolescents, in particular, types of situations and backgrounds. However, we were not always successful because of insufficient information about the adolescent from another person. For example, we might have been looking for a person from a wealthier family, but after beginning the interview and asking about family income, we found that the family could not be seen as "wealthy" by most standards.

We also experienced some refusals. For example, some adolescents did not have the time or could not invite us to their homes. If we could not arrange another time or place for the interview, we were unable to talk to them. Although most interviews were done in the adolescent's home, some were completed in community centres, libraries, churches, and restaurants.

E. The Questions

After obtaining detailed biographical information from each adolescent, we asked about their present school or work activities. In the next section, we focused on their short-term plans: what they thought they would be doing in two and five years and where they were seeking advice and assistance in making those plans. In preparation for their projections of a weekday when they are thirty years old, we asked first for a "diary" of a present weekday. In this question, we wanted them to describe for us what they did from the time they got up in the morning

until they went to bed. This section provided rich material on the adolescent lifestyle, since we asked about relationships, school activities, leisure pursuits, and home responsibilities.

The diary of a day in their lives at the age of thirty provided fascinating information covering their projected work lives, marital status and family lives, leisure activities, and general ambitions. We then described to the adolescents a series of unexpected situations that could possibly happen to them at some point in the future, and asked how they thought they would cope if they happened to them. We also inquired into their knowledge of opportunities and ended with a question about who they admired or would like to emulate.

In analysing the interview material, we made comparisons between males and females, rural and urban dwellers, students and non-students, and among many of the background details we asked. As in other research, we wanted to see how the adolescents' socioeconomic background influenced their attitudes and aspirations. By socioeconomic background, we mean a combination of parental education, occupation, and income. However, many adolescents did not have an accurate perception of their family income. Our estimates of some of the families combined with the adolescents' own estimates of their family income gave us an average income of about $30,000 for 87 adolescents out of the 150. In 1983, the average Canadian family income was $30,580.[10] It thus appears that our sample was similar to the Canadian population in terms of income. In discussions of the influence of income on adolescents' attitudes or lifestyle, we categorized those over $30,000 as "well-off" and those under as "poorer". But because the information on income was obtained from only half of the adolescents, we relied more on education and occupation of the parents when discussing the socioeconomic status (SES) of all of the families. Throughout the following chapters, we have emphasized that adolescents are not a unified group, despite the fact that they have common concerns. Their present activities, their planning, and their future aspirations tend to vary with the circumstances under which they live.

The interviews lasted from one to two hours. Since many of them were done in their own homes, we were able to obtain more information than could easily be analysed with a computer. Details about the role of television in their

lives, their enthusiasms, their present activities, and also their own comments in the interview enriched our findings. We have supplemented our analysis with direct quotes from the adolescents who were interviewed, but in each case, their real names have been replaced by pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

In the following four chapters, we will discuss both the present activities of adolescents and their short- and longer-term plans with respect to education, work, and the organization of their personal lives. With concrete information about the lives of this group of adolescent girls, readers can then add their own thinking about what should be done to prepare young women better for their often difficult future lives. This information should be useful to counsellors, teachers, parents, and government programs, and not least, to young women themselves in enabling them to make more realistic plans for the future.

CHAPTER 2
EDUCATION: REALITIES AND PLANS

"You can't go nowhere without education."

Carla: 15 years old, Montreal

A. Introduction: The Increasing Need for Education

In the past decade, the need for adolescents to stay in school longer has become increasingly obvious. The gap between the opportunities for those who receive a post-secondary education and those who do not are widening. The growing requirement for formal schooling has decreased the employability of the high school drop-out.[1] Since high school graduation has become a minimum requirement for most jobs, the desire for college and university training has also increased. But recently, rising entrance requirements and costs seem to be keeping many potential students out of some universities. Government funds for education are shrinking at the very time that the demand for post-secondary education is rising.

Over the past two decades, a rising proportion of young people have enrolled in post-secondary institutions in Canada. In 1982-83, about 22% of 18- to 24-year-olds were enrolled in college or university, compared to about 6% in 1951 (see Table 1). In addition to this, the percentage of female students in colleges and universities has increased dramatically in recent years, both in undergraduate and post-graduate studies (see Table 2). However, it is ironic that the value of the university degree is falling in terms of the kind of job that it will "buy". "Education inflation" has meant that more education is needed for each job. However, women experience the additional problem of entering the labour market with less adequate preparation than male students and therefore are less able to support themselves when they graduate.

Table 1: Full-Time Post-Secondary Enrolment as a Proportion of the Relevant Age Groups, by Level

Year	Non-University	University		Total Post-Secondary
		Undergraduate	Graduate	
	(% of population aged 18-21 years)	(% of population aged 18-21 years)	(% of population aged 22-24 years)	(% of population aged 18-24 years)
1951	3.2	7.0	0.6	6.0
1961	5.3	11.9	1.1	10.6
1971	11.2	18.5	3.2	18.5
1981-82*	14.4	18.6	3.4	20.5
1982-83*	15.4	19.7	3.6	21.7

Sources: Canada, Statistics Canada, **Perspectives Canada III,** H.J. Adler and D.A. Brusegard, eds. (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, April 1980), catalogue no. 11-511, table 4.9, p. 78.

* Statistics Canada, **Education in Canada: A Statistical Review for 1982-83** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, June 1984), catalogue no. 81-229, table 7, p. 65.

Table 2: Female Enrolment as a Percentage of Total Post-Secondary Enrolment, by Level

Year	Non-University	University			Total Post-Secondary
		Undergraduate	Graduate	Total	
1961	69.1	26.2	16.4	25.7	38.5
1966	55.3	33.7	18.0	32.4	38.3
1971	45.9	37.7	22.6	36.0	39.5
1976	49.8	43.7	30.6	42.3	45.1
1981*	51.9	48.9	39.0	44.0	48.3
1982**	52.9	51.7	38.6	50.1	50.8

Sources: Canada, Statistics Canada, **Perspectives Canada III**, H.J. Adler and D.A. Brusegard, eds. (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, April 1980), catalogue no. 11-511, table 4.11, p. 79.

* Statistics Canada, **School Attendance and Level of Schooling** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, January 1984), catalogue no. 92-914, tables 2-1, 2-2.

** Statistics Canada, **Education in Canada: A Statistical Review for 1982-1983** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, June 1984), catalogue no. 81-229, tables 2-6, pp. 58-64.

This increasing need for education has not been felt equally in all sectors of society. Attitudes towards learning are first learned in the home. The parents' level of education, their attitudes towards the school system, and the value they place on learning is usually reflected in their children. However, parents' attitudes tend to vary by their social position in society. Researchers studying social class differences in educational attainment and aspirations have suggested that the school is biased against working-class adolescents. This means that those most in need of assistance because of their less privileged family

background tend to resent the school system and take less advantage of its potential rewards. They often leave school because they feel less emotional attachment to the daily life of school.[2]

Although girls do as well as boys in school, and are more likely than boys to complete high school in most provinces,[3] many young women also lack long-term and realistic plans for paid work. Although not all girls want to work for pay as adults, many will find that they have to supplement the family income or support themselves later in life. Earlier studies have suggested that girls plan for their education in less detail and do not link it to their future occupational goals as well as boys.[4] Their lack of educational and occupational planning can result in higher rates of under-employment and unemployment in the future. For example, in May 1984 the unemployment rate for a male with a university degree was 5%, but for a woman it was 7%.[5] However, the courses people take are not the sole determinant of the jobs they get. There is also discrimination against women, especially in the skilled trades and professional jobs, which even well-educated and carefully prepared women find difficult to overcome. At all levels of the work force, women experience more difficulty getting promoted than men with equal qualifications.[6]

Both gender and socioeconomic status (SES) are important factors which shape and even limit the futures of adolescents. In this chapter, we will examine the interview material relating to education, and discuss how adolescent women perceive the importance of education, their experiences with guidance counselling, and their educational plans. From the interviews and other studies, we will examine the educational attainment and expectations of girls and boys, look at factors influencing their occupational choices, and discuss the consequences of their educational planning for their future lives. Throughout this chapter, we will show how various background factors influence the educational attainment and aspirations of adolescents.

B. The Importance of Education

Although other studies have reported that students complain that their formal schooling does not adequately prepare them for the job market or the practical realities of life,[7] many educational administrators have resisted the demand to orient education more closely to the labour market.[8] Instead they have argued that formal schooling should teach students to think, to understand their culture, to communicate effectively, and to broaden their intellectual horizons rather than provide job skills. These educational professionals have also argued that with a rapidly changing labour market, it may be impractical and uneconomical to train students for jobs which may not exist by the time they graduate.

In recent years, however, the value of ever higher levels of education on the labour market has declined. For example, graduates from the 1980s are experiencing more problems finding jobs related to their studies than did graduates from the 1960s.[9] The sheer number of high school and university graduates heightens competition in a shrinking employment market. At the same time, education inflation has meant that more degrees or diplomas are required for many jobs. Even when they stay in school longer, well-educated young people are sometimes unemployed or under-employed.

Despite this education inflation, the fact remains that higher unemployment rates are found among those who leave school early than among those who graduate. In May 1984, the unemployment rates for persons 15 to 24 years old were 29% for those with less than high school education, 19% for those with high school graduation, 21% for those with some post-secondary education, and 15% for those with a post-secondary diploma or degree.[10] This clearly shows that increased levels of education do tend to help the young person find a job, even if it is not in their chosen field.

Regardless of their social background, most of the young people in the study were well aware of the advantages which post-secondary education would have for finding work. When asked what was the most important thing in their lives at the time of the interview, the most frequent answer for both sexes was

"school" or "my education". About 45% of the young women in the study gave this answer, elaborating on it in later questions. Both higher and lower SES students and those from different ethnic backgrounds tended to give this answer, linking education to jobs.

> "Once you get out of school, you can get a job. You have a chance to, anyway."
>
> Rob: 15 years old, rural Nova Scotia

> (The most important thing is) ". . . to graduate with high marks, because you really need high marks with jobs so hard to get."
>
> Susan: 15 years old, Winnipeg

Some of the early school leavers also realized the importance of education after they had left school. Nineteen-year-old Michelle said that if she were a guidance counsellor speaking to a 19-year-old girl:

> "I would tell her to stay in school as long as she can, cause you can't get very far with a Secondary IV education." (translation)
>
> Michelle: 19 years old, rural Quebec

This comment was typical of about two thirds of the school leavers.

Although the importance of education and schooling was emphasized by the adolescents in the interviews, the majority of interviewees viewed schooling as an adolescent pursuit. For example, students implied that life began after education. Elaine, who went to a private school, after describing a typical weekday in her present life, said:

> "Oh it sounds so boring! School is like a prison. They watch us like hawks . . . we're treated like five-year-olds!"
>
> Elaine: 17 years old, Montreal

Later, she wistfully said that life must be so much better when you're out of school. Gail, from a divorced, low SES home, made a similar suggestion when she presented the following scenario for her life:

> "Get through schooling, get out, finish everything, be able to work, and get rich."
>
> Gail: 17 years old, Vancouver

In the minds of some adolescents, the end of school marked the beginning of adulthood. However, some may find that they cannot get into the course of their choice immediately after high school because of increased competition and higher entrance requirements. Others may have to work at some job unrelated to their interests before they qualify for their chosen job. Or they may have to upgrade their qualifications or retrain if requirements alter or if their skills become outdated due to technological change. Despite the growing trend of returning to college or university later in life, few of the adolescents anticipated anything other than a clear path from high school to college to work, with no return to "re-tool" later.

C. School Life

1. Academic Courses

The fact that fewer females than males have been studying mathematics and science has become a great concern of women's groups, some guidance counsellors, the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and the Science Council of Canada. The decision to drop these courses eliminates choices of university and college programs, and, as well, reduces employment possibilities among some highly paid jobs (such as medicine, engineering, computer science, or scientific research). According to the Science Council of Canada, girls sometimes find science and mathematics courses less interesting than other courses because of the way the subject material is focused on theoretical rather than practical issues. Also, the examples used in the textbooks are often more relevant to the interests of teenage boys than they are to teenage girls. Not

surprisingly, these courses have been stereotyped as "masculine", and this further discourages girls from pursuing them, even when they are doing well.[11]

If we look at enrolment figures in high school, college, and university (when students have some choice of what they study), we find that despite attempts of a few school boards or individual counsellors and teachers to encourage girls to avail themselves of a wider variety of educational courses, "sex-typing" is still prevalent. By this we mean that courses are often informally or implicitly seen as inappropriate for one sex or the other by students, teachers, or guidance counsellors. High school and college women are still more likely to study languages, literature, art, home economics, typing, and social studies if given the choice, rather than taking science, mathematics, or "industrial arts". Recent enrolment figures from Canadian community colleges indicate that young women are moving into a wider variety of courses. For example, business and data processing are roughly equal in the sex distribution. However, education, arts, nursing, secretarial courses, and community and social service programs still involve a majority of females and engineering courses continue to be dominated by males.[12]

This "sex-typing" is even more noticeable in enrolment figures at Canadian universities. Although more women have enrolled in medicine, law, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine over the last decade (see Table 3), women are far more likely than men to study education, nursing, and household science. On the other hand, men tend to take science, engineering, applied science, dentistry, medicine, law, and business and commerce.[13] This tendency for males and females to study different subjects is consequential when they go to look for jobs after graduation. Students with general arts degrees (generally female) have more difficulty finding work and often find themselves unemployed.[14] Women are also less likely than men to continue their studies beyond the bachelor's degree, although an increasing proportion of women are doing master's degrees, especially in social sciences and education.

In our study, we asked for their favourite subjects and found that 38% of the girls chose subjects we categorized as "feminine" (including typing, home economics, languages, literature, art, music, and drama), about 18% chose courses

we categorized as "neuter" (including biological and social sciences and physical education), and 44% of the girls chose "masculine" courses (including mathematics, sciences, computer science, and accounting). Of the "masculine" subjects, girls preferred computer science and accounting over courses such as mathematics, physics or chemistry.

Table 3: Female Full-Time Undergraduate Enrolment as a Percentage of Total Full-Time Enrolment, 1978-79 and 1982-83

	1978-79 (%)	1982-83 (%)
Arts	53	55
Science	38	38
Commerce and Business Administration	32	40
Education	66	68
Engineering and Applied Science	8	11
Dentistry	18	24
Medicine	33	40
Nursing	97	97
Pharmacy	63	65
Household Science	98	96
Law	34	42
Veterinary Medicine	42	51

Source: Calculated from Statistics Canada, **Education in Canada: A Statistical Review for 1982-83** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, June 1984), catalogue no. 81-229, pp. 59-60.

Of the twenty-four girls who chose non-traditional careers or paid jobs which women do not usually do, eleven (45%) named mathematics or science as their favourite subject. Preference for mathematics and science courses does not mean that adolescent girls will necessarily follow through to a non-traditional career. Mathematics and especially accounting can be used in bank work or other clerical positions which women typically do. In addition to this, girls may prefer a particular subject, but know that they cannot find paid employment in this field. Alternatively, they may enjoy the subject at a junior level, but not want to study this subject at an advanced level. In a more qualitative examination of this question, we found that there were often inconsistencies between their favourite subjects and their future careers. For example, 15-year-old Penny, who wanted to be a secretary, said that her favourite subjects were mathematics and science. On the other hand, 16-year-old Kim enjoyed English and Family Studies, but was aware that there were no jobs in English. She speculated about going to university to take computer science. More research on the relationship between course preferences and future educational and occupational plans would have to be done before we could discuss this topic more conclusively.

In our study, about 20% of the girls made explicit comments about the importance of mathematics, science or computer courses when talking about guidance advice or their own careers. Here are some of their comments:

> (If I were a guidance counsellor) ". . . I would tell her to take three accounting courses and maths . . . also computer courses. If you take accounting, you can get a good job!"
>
> Cathy: 16 years old, rural Ontario

> (If I were a guidance counsellor) "I would tell her to take courses that are needed to get a job . . . like electronics."
>
> Jane: 16 years old, Ottawa

> "My favourite subjects are science and math . . . In five years, I'll probably be in medical school."
>
> Louise: 15 years old, Winnipeg

The other 80% of the students either did not specifically mention these courses because they did not think they were interesting or because they had not thought of them for this answer. A few students, especially those from wealthier backgrounds, stated that they did not think it was important to take job-related courses, but rather things which were intrinsically interesting. For example, Julia, whose parents had professional jobs and were able to afford to send her to a private school, said:

> "I'd tell her to choose something she's sure she likes. Money's not important . . . something she's relatively good at . . ."
>
> Julia: 15 years old, Montreal

In addition to "sex-typing" in school courses, there is some evidence that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are channelled into non-academic or vocational programs and work-study programs despite their ability.[15] This "class bias" is reinforced by the student's need to contribute to the family income, the desire for earlier independence from family, and less encouragement from peers, parents, and teachers. The lower socioeconomic female is often the hardest hit, because she is influenced by both sexist expectations and a class bias. Her own expectation of early marriage and the desire to earn some money before marriage often discourages a long commitment to education. Teachers and counsellors sometimes reinforce this low commitment by channelling the lower SES girls into courses such as typing, accounting, domestic science, hairdressing, and child care which lead them into the lower paying female job ghettoes. Here are some examples from our interviews to illustrate this point. Kelly received a B-average in school and her father was a skilled labourer. Cheryl came from a low-income home.

> "In our class, we filled out forms for jobs. She (guidance counsellor) said I was suited for cashier or nurse's assistant."
>
> Kelly: 15 years old, rural Ontario

> (Have you ever been called in to the guidance department?) "Yeah, I got offered a job at school for the summer, but I said I was goin' away." (Why were they offering you a job?)

"I asked that too! They said it's for students who aren't goin' to college or university." (How'd you feel about that?) "Not good, because I do plan to go to school. Just because I don't have A's don't mean I can't do it!" (What was the job?) "Some kind of shop thing where they make things out of wood . . . metal work . . . really stupid and boring!" (Did you feel they were trying to hold you back?) "They were saying I was dumb! And I am not!"

Cheryl: 16 years old, Vancouver

Secondary school level work-study programs combine academic courses with on-the-job training. These programs are usually seen as beneficial by students because of their expectations that the experience will help them find full-time work. However, they often orient girls with lower academic achievement as well as those from lower SES families into traditionally female "pink collar jobs", such as waitressing, hairdressing, and clerical work. These jobs usually do not pay very high wages. At the same time, however, considering the high divorce rate in Canada, the probability is very high that many young women will be supporting themselves and their children by the time they are thirty or thirty-five years old.

2. Extracurricular Activities

From the point of view of learning experiences, what adolescents do at school outside of the classroom may be as important for them as their academic subjects. They may be gaining skills in team-work and perseverance in organized sports. They could be acquiring experience in public speaking or managerial skills in committees, clubs or special events. In their organized activities or their informal socializing, they may learn more practical information about how to get along in the world than they acquire in the classroom.

In our interviews, the social lives of the adolescents were usually focused around the school. They socialized in the halls near their lockers before classes, they met in the cafeteria at lunch time, and they socialized after classes. They were also involved in organized clubs and activities. Since most of the clubs they mentioned were on the school premises, we can use the question about

membership in clubs or organizations as a rough indication of their extracurricular activities.

About one third of the adolescents we interviewed belonged to no organizations, either at school or in the community. About two thirds were a member of at least one club, team, or organized group, spending an average of about seven hours a week in organized activities. In order to make a clear comparison, we divided the adolescents into three groups, and compared the two extreme groups – those who joined no organizations at all with those actively involved. We omitted the middle group to highlight the differences between very active joiners and those who belonged to no groups.

a) The Joiners

The "joiners" formed about one third of the 150 interviews and spent five hours or more each week in organized activities outside of class. If we look at what groups of adolescents were most involved in organized activities, we find that 50% of the boys and 30% of the girls were active "joiners". These adolescents also tended to be students with higher grades in school than the non-joiners, and also tended to come from higher SES families. Those who participated in cultural or political clubs were especially likely to come from higher SES families. Joiners more often than not had a positive attitude towards school and tended to have higher educational aspirations than those adolescents who belonged to no organized groups.

Not surprisingly, the boys and girls joined different clubs. The boys were more involved in organized sports and computer clubs, while the girls participated more often in religious and cultural clubs (church young people's groups, school choirs, drama club, or yearbook club).

An example of a very active "joiner" was a 16-year-old Toronto girl from a higher SES home who listed among her organizational activities the school band, the school newspaper, the athletic association, and a musical which the school was putting on. She also had her own agent as an actress and was vice-president of the church youth group. Although this girl was exceptional in her level

of involvement and the variety of clubs to which she belonged, her case shows how many adolescents' social lives are tied in with school. In her case, several of her extracurricular activities could assist her in her future career plans; she was considering acting or journalism as a future occupation.

b) Non-Joiners

"Non-joiners" comprised about one third of the sample. They tended to be more estranged from the school than the joiners. Some received poorer grades, others came from families which did not encourage active participation in school activities, and yet others rushed off to paid work after school and did not have the time for extracurricular activities. An example of a "non-joiner" was a fifteen-year-old from a lower SES family in rural Nova Scotia. In her spare time she visited her boyfriend, chatted to her neighbour, read adventure stories and romances, talked on the telephone, and listened to music. She did not belong to any organizations, either at school or in her community. She caught the bus home from school directly after classes ended.

Another example of a "non-joiner" was 16-year-old Velda, a West Indian girl, who was temporarily living in a transition house in Toronto. This girl was in Grade 11 in a public high school, and did not have a part-time job. After school, she came straight back to the hostel and started her homework. She said that in her leisure time she read fiction, watched television, listened to music, and cooked. She expected to work as a legal secretary after attending college.

As with other issues in this study, gender and the socioeconomic status of the adolescents are both important influences in their participation in extra-curricular activities. Generally speaking, students from higher SES families and males tended to participate in organized activities more than those from lower SES families and females. This is true despite the fact that students from lower SES families are less likely to have part-time work after school and would therefore have the time to participate in extracurricular activities. In the chapter on personal life, we will discuss leisure activities in more detail.

3. Guidance Counselling

The role of the guidance counsellor in focusing the student's aspirations and decision making has been well-researched in the education literature. Whether or not the guidance counsellor should deal with the short-term task of providing information on courses and jobs, or with the longer-term task of providing information and skills for life-long decision making, remains a controversy. However, in either case, it is supposed to be the major role of the guidance counsellor to assist students to map out their educational and occupational futures. Students both in our study and in other research[16] clearly expected guidance counsellors to assist them in choosing courses and to help them find employment.

There were two main reasons for going to see a guidance counsellor in our interviews: to obtain specific information about college or university entrance requirements or changing courses, and for personal counselling. Fifty-three per cent of the adolescents went to guidance only for specific information, and seventeen per cent went for personal counselling. The rest had not been to a guidance counsellor at all. Let us look at what kind of people went for each reason.

a) Went to Guidance for Specific Information

About three quarters of those who went to guidance at all, went to obtain specific information. Many went to drop courses or to add new ones to their schedule, or to ask about course requirements. They also went to obtain the results of occupational interest questionnaires which they sometimes filled out in class. When they were told for which job they were suited, they occasionally expected to be informed about where the vacancies were for this particular job.

When the characteristics of those who used guidance facilities for information are examined, we find more girls (77%) than boys (68%) in this group. We also found that older females with higher grades in school made more use of guidance resources, but were often more critical than others of the quality of advice.

About 84% of those adolescents who went for information were relatively satisfied with the information they received. The adolescents whose parents had a high school education and were at neither end of the income range, students with average grades in school, and those from rural areas were especially satisfied with their guidance advice. Here are some of their comments:

> "Yes (I've been to guidance). I can talk to them easily. They are ready to help if there are problems. They're willing to help with information."
>
> Margaret: 17 years old, Toronto

> "Yes, I've been, and I'll go again before I graduate . . . to see what college to go to for the job I want and to see if he thinks it's a wise choice I'm making."
>
> Mary: 16 years old, rural Nova Scotia

> "Yes, to get information on CEGEP and my career plans . . . I'd go see him again, but not the same counsellor. It would be to confirm my choice of CEGEP and course selection." (translation)
>
> Louis: 16 years old, rural Quebec

> "Last year, I went to change to another math class, because I didn't like the teacher . . . Possibly I'd go back, but I think I already know what I want to go into."
>
> Mara: 17 years old, Toronto

Many of the complaints about guidance dealt with the counsellor's inability to answer questions about specific requirements for college or university, or courses required for particular jobs. Males seemed more critical than females in this regard, and urban students were more critical than rural ones.

> "I went to guidance to ask about my career . . . I knew more than she did!"
>
> Elaine: 17 years old, Montreal

"... I wouldn't go back because I felt pressured. It was compulsory in Grade 12 to see him. And he didn't even offer to find the information I needed about a business school here."

Brenda: 19 years old, Halifax

"Yes, I've been quite a few times, to get information on university, to check course requirements, and for dropping courses ... They are misleading and too anxious to help students drop courses. I find that I know more than they do on some subjects."

John: 18 years old, Toronto

"... We had to choose our own courses there. I find them very conservative. They offer present-day job skills, while the future lies in originality. We can't rely on guidance counsellors for information on anything new." (translation)

Pierre: 18 years old, Montreal

Some of the schools operate their guidance department like a drop-in centre, where students are encouraged to come and look up material from resource books or to use the computer to search for specific university requirements. Students in the Toronto area, in particular, mentioned computer facilities in their guidance office. Higher SES students tended to use these facilities more and to be more satisfied with them than other students. Here are two of their comments:

(The guidance department is) "... very helpful for general things... They have a computer program for jobs, and they also have aptitude tests."

Kathy: 16 years old, Toronto

"Yes, they're helpful ... if you need suggestions. I took a computer aptitude test and found out I was suited for a teacher."

Carol: 16 years old, Toronto

b) Personal Counselling in the Guidance Office

Of those who went to guidance, about one fifth mentioned that they had used their guidance department for personal counselling. Although counselling services were used by students from all backgrounds, those who went for counselling tended to have lower grades in school, to come from lower SES families, to be school leavers, or to have experienced a family problem such as a death or divorce. Those who went for personal counselling were mixed in their reactions, but there were more negative and hostile comments from this group than from those who went to guidance to obtain specific information. Those who went to guidance counsellors voluntarily and those from higher SES families tended to be more positive about the advice they received.

> ". . . our guidance counsellor is really nice . . . she helps a lot and listens."
>
> Nancy: 16 years old, Winnipeg

> "Yes, last year I was there all the time . . . I can tell her things I can't tell my best friend or my parents. I went to a psychologist through her advice but I decided I had to work out my problem myself."
>
> Paula: 17 years old, Dartmouth

> "I went for disorganization – mine! My social life was getting too involved, and was cutting into my school work. I wanted to transfer out of math. I **detested** it! But my counsellor talked me into staying . . . Yes, I think they are useful. You can talk about personal problems and school life."
>
> Clare: 16 years old, Toronto

> "Yeah, she knows more. She's been through it. I'd go again. I felt she, like, knew what I was goin' through."
>
> Carolyne: 15 years old, Vancouver

Other reactions were more neutral. For example, the teen mothers in the study who were no longer in school didn't seriously criticize guidance

counsellors, although they usually said that other types of counsellors outside the school had been more useful. However, girls who become pregnant during high school may have a particular need for guidance services. Here are three comments from teen mothers, and one from a young woman (Christine) in a group home:

> "Yes, I went when I was in school and was having problems with my father . . . There was not much he could do. He just listened . . . Now I go to Jessie's (transition house for women). My counsellor is also a single mother, and she understands. She's very useful . . . terrific!"
>
> Jennifer: 18 years old, Toronto

> "I saw a counsellor at the Home of the Guardian Angel (Home for Unwed Mothers) . . . I had quite a few problems when I went there and it was nice to talk openly with somebody. She pointed out the good and bad sides of keeping the baby and helped me arrive at a solution in the end."
>
> Sue: 19 years old, rural Nova Scotia

> "When I got pregnant, I went to talk. The counsellor advised me against keeping the baby. He didn't like the baby's father and didn't want me to stay with him. I think the YWCA counsellors are more useful (Teen Moms' Program). They are supportive of my decision (to keep the baby)."
>
> Heather: 19 years old, Toronto

> "Rather than go to the guidance department, I see a social worker for personal development. I don't get along at home. My father died when I was young . . ."
>
> Christine: 17 years old, Ottawa

In our study, those who were sent to the guidance office for disciplinary problems were the most negative. These students consistently came from lower SES families and although our sample of males was small, males tended to be over-represented in this group (3% of females and 16% of males who went to guidance). Here are two comments from those who were considered "disciplinary problems" and who were participating in a YMCA "diversion program" where we interviewed them:

"I once went for a fight I had with three girls . . . I'm a good fighter! . . . It was over taking away my best friend. We talked it over, but she didn't help. She started accusing me. I got so pissed off, I felt like slugging her!"

Carla: 15 years old, Montreal

"I went two weeks ago. I got kicked out of class for the rest of the year (it was February) . . . for throwing chalk. The guidance counsellor said I should respect my elders (mimics counsellor's voice), behave myself, and think before doing it . . . I wouldn't go back. They're only trouble! They want to know your life!"

Frank: 17 years old, Montreal

The guidance counsellor, as a representative of the authority of the school, is often seen by the student as siding against them. A number of students expressed this attitude, even if they were not actually sent to guidance:

"She (guidance counsellor) tries to tell you what courses to take. And she says, 'Oh you **have** to go to college or university to get a job' . . . (Did you listen?) No! I wouldn't do what she says. (Why not?) Well . . . she's a bitch! You can't trust her! O.K. I'll give you an example. A friend of mine was in Grade 8 and she was pregnant. She couldn't tell her parents or she'd be . . . like . . . dead! She didn't know what to do at all, so she went to this guidance counsellor and tells her, so what does she do? She phones the girl's parents right away and tells them . . . So, I wouldn't tell her **anything**!"

Anne: 15 years old, Vancouver

"I hate them (guidance counsellors)! I've been in tears because of them. They interrogate you! They discourage you to go to their school."

Tanya: 17 years old, Toronto

The problems which these adolescents experienced with guidance may reflect their hostile attitude towards the school system or authority figures in general. However, it may also be indicative of the difficult rapport between the often middle-class counsellor and the working-class student. Successful counselling

depends so much on developing rapport with the student. Generally the students from lower SES backgrounds were more dissatisfied with the quality of personal counselling than were other students in our study. While the students from higher SES families often went to psychologists or psychiatrists outside the school system if they could not talk to the guidance counsellor but still needed help, students from lower SES families were less likely to have this option.

c) Those Who Had Never Been to Guidance

In our study, about 30% of the adolescents had never been to guidance. These tended to be younger students (15- and 16-year-olds) who intended to go as they neared the time to make decisions about their future. However, it also included those students who felt that they had no need to go, either because they used other counselling facilities or because they generally tried to work out their own solutions to problems. Students hostile to the school system often felt that they had nothing to gain from guidance counsellors. And, finally, it included those students who had no guidance department at their school.

Among the 15- and 16-year-olds, there were many who had never talked to a counsellor. Usually, they planned to go within the next year, to ask about university requirements or courses they should be taking to prepare them for university. Generally, the younger students who had never been to counsellors held favourable attitudes to them, and may have been exposed to counsellors in other ways. When we asked if they had ever been to a guidance counsellor, here were some of their answers:

> "No, he comes to the classroom. I plan to go and see him individually about my course selection. It's a personal initiative. I'm afraid I'll fail physics and chemistry. I want advice." (translation)
>
> Lise: 15 years old, rural Quebec

> "No, but I've made an appointment to see one. The man (counsellor) came in last week to discuss it."
>
> Daniella: 16 years old, Ottawa

"No, I've had no reason to so far in school."

Tom: 15 years old, rural Nova Scotia

Twelve per cent of the adolescents, especially males and rural adolescents, felt that they had no need to go to a guidance counsellor. In some cases they had already decided what they want to do. In other cases, they discussed these matters with someone else. Here are some examples:

(Have you ever been to a guidance counsellor?) "Not formally. One came to our English class and I talked to him afterwards. I wouldn't bother going. I've already mapped out my future."

Doug: 16 years old, Ottawa

"No, I don't need it. My mom guides me through everything."

Lisa: 15 years old, rural British Columbia

"No . . . well, we have to go once a year. But I usually don't have the time. They let us out of classes to go. But I don't think that much about the future."

Joanne: 15 years old, rural Ontario

"No, I'd likely go if I was really desperate and confused about what I wanted to do in a job. I'd rather go to my mother or my friends."

Linda B.: 16 years old, rural Nova Scotia

"No. Since my father wants to hire me into his business and I've always wanted to be a secretary I already know what to do." (translation)

Diane: 15 years old, rural Quebec

Other students had never been to a counsellor, or never discussed anything important with them, because they were intimidated by them. Poorer immigrant students and rural Native people were especially likely to react in this

way. They were afraid that counsellors wouldn't understand their personal situation or would pass judgement on them. They preferred to discuss their problems and concerns with a person who knew them personally, who understood their ethnic background or who had more understanding of their lifestyle. Here are a few of the comments of those reluctant to discuss their personal lives with "strangers": Anne-Marie and Rosemary are both immigrants from South America, Monique lives on a rural Indian reserve, and Pam comes from a low-income family.

> "No. I stuck to the classroom information sessions. The counsellors seem so distant from me and my needs. They judge you mostly according to your grades. I can't see how they could possibly help me." (translation)
>
> Anne-Marie: 18 years old, Montreal

> "I only went to change subjects . . . I never talked to a counsellor. I'd like to, but I never had the guts!"
>
> Rosemary: 16 years old, Toronto

> "Many people from (the Native community in Quebec) are too embarrassed to go and see the guidance counsellor. That's why I want to become a guidance counsellor." (translation)
>
> Monique: 19 years old, rural Quebec

> "I don't feel comfortable talking to people I don't know. I go to a friend, more or less." (What if you wanted advice about courses?) "I do it on my own . . . what I want to do. If I'm called in, I go."
>
> Pam: 16 years old, Vancouver

A few adolescents who had never been to guidance counsellors were very hostile to the idea of going. Males were more likely than females to be in this category. School leavers, those who received low grades, and those who disliked school were more likely to be hostile. Here is one example:

"No. I've never been. They're all ass-holes. Two-faced. I didn't like school, period!"

Bob: 19 years old, Toronto

And, finally, a few adolescents in the study did not go to their guidance counsellor because their school did not have one. In particular, students from rural or remote areas lacked these facilities. As Micheline, a Native girl from rural Quebec, said when we asked if she had ever been to a guidance counsellor:

"Never. The service doesn't exist." (translation)

Micheline: 16 years old, rural Quebec

d) **Problems with Guidance Services**

A very basic problem from the point of view of students is that not all schools have guidance services. Others have only part-time counsellors, who must divide their time with administrative or teaching duties. If the students feel that the counsellor does not have much time, they may be reluctant to raise complex or lengthy questions, which may be far more important to discuss than the shorter factual ones.

"I don't like going to our counsellor here. She doesn't have enough time, because she is a ———— teacher and vice-principal. I'd go to one of my other teachers."

Laura C.: 16 years old, Montreal

"I went two days ago to see if I could take particular courses and to inquire into alternative school . . . She gave me solid advice, but I don't like her. She's always late and yawns through her appointments . . . The guidance staff here is so overworked!"

Christine: 17 years old, Ottawa

A second problem for counsellors is the vast amount of information to remember on requirements for college and university as well as the changing job

market. The rapidly changing job market and requirements for higher education make it difficult to know where to direct the student. With computerized listings of the entrance requirements of colleges and universities, some of the memory work is eased. Students appreciate this addition to guidance facilities, but these facilities often cater to the brighter students who are less in need of detailed counselling.

An additional problem with guidance counselling is the possibility of there being implicit or explicit transmission of traditional and sexist attitudes to the female student. Although non-sexist guidelines have been set by many education ministries, school boards, teachers' associations, and affirmative action advisors, these guidelines can easily be passed over by the individual counsellor. In our survey, we did not find any required training for guidance counsellors on problems with sexism in teaching or in career counselling. We do know that seminars exist and these are often the topic of professional development days in one area or another. However, there is no systematic training on these important issues. Several girls in the study expressed a preference for young female counsellors, who they felt were more in tune with the changing role of women. Here is one example of such a comment:

> "... it depends on the guidance counsellor. I've been to both male and female. Females are easier to deal with ... well, I found her easier to talk to because she's my own sex and younger than others."
>
> Glenda: 15 years old, Toronto

Suggestions have been made in the media that guidance counsellors are not providing girls with the counselling they need.[17] They have suggested that counsellors lack the time and the training to provide adequate services to counteract the prevailing attitudes about the role of women. Recently, guidance people have tried to encourage professionals of both sexes to visit the schools to talk about their work, they have organized seminars and workshops on sex-role stereotyping, and have tried to introduce "hands-on experience" for girls in the skilled trades. Although nearly three quarters of our sample expressed some satisfaction with guidance services, there is plenty of evidence which we will

discuss later to show that other influences in the lives of girls often counteract guidance advice.

4. Non-Students

Although there were only 25 non-students in the study, their situations and comments provide good illustrations of why young people quit school, the importance of education in finding work, and the difficulties of returning to school once one has left. The examples particularly emphasize the relationship between family SES and staying in school, as the non-students in this project (both graduates and school leavers) tended to come from lower SES families. Although in most provinces, males tend to leave school earlier than girls do, we are concentrating on the situations of the females because they were the focus of the project. We will examine their reasons for leaving school, and the situations in which we found them at the time of the interview.

a) Reasons for Leaving School

Adolescents leave school for many reasons. In our interviews, the major reasons given were graduation, lack of interest, need or desire for money, and pregnancy or marriage. We should reiterate that the term "school leavers" refers to those non-students who left **before** graduation. Each type of reason for leaving school will be examined separately, with examples.

i) Graduation from High School

Of the fifteen non-students who were female, five left because they had graduated. Unlike other non-students, these girls were all employed at the time of the interview. For example, 19-year-old Marilyn from Ottawa worked in a sports store for $4.00 per hour. Nineteen-year-old Lucille from Montreal worked as a hairdresser for $850 per month. Nineteen-year-old Maria, an immigrant woman living in Montreal, baby-sat for $436 a month. Although these women seemed quite satisfied with their jobs, they tended to see them as temporary. Other than the hairdresser, the rest talked of returning to school.

ii) Lack of Interest

Five girls left school because they simply did not enjoy it. Most of them also mentioned that they were doing poorly and skipping classes. None of them were employed full time, although two had part-time jobs. All of these women came from lower SES backgrounds. Sue, who now lives with her mother and receives welfare, told the interviewer that she left school three years ago after Grade 9. When asked why, she replied:

> "I wasn't doin' nothing in school, so I left."
>
> Sue: 19 years old, rural Nova Scotia

Colette, who came from a divorced welfare home, left school three years ago.

> "At the school I went to, the principals treated us like savages and showed no respect for us whatsoever. They made me completely sick of school." (translation)
>
> Colette: 17 years old, Montreal

Mariette, a Native girl, quit school after Grade 7 because:

> "I don't like Whites and their school. They laughed at me because I didn't speak French properly." (spoken through an interpreter)
>
> Mariette: 16 years old, rural Quebec

Despite the fact that she left school before graduation, Mariette had been actively trying to improve her education in areas which she felt were relevant – to give herself a more meaningful understanding of her own culture. At the time of the interview, Mariette was involved in a government-sponsored project to teach Native young people about their heritage, to encourage them to learn traditional skills in the bush, and to involve them in Native crafts. While she retrained, she was paid $400 per month.

Joan from Vancouver was working as an "au pair girl", and also did volunteer work at an alternative school. When asked why she quit school, she replied:

> "I was in a rut. I thought I'd take a year off . . . I wasn't doing any work. But I don't feel ready to go back."
>
> Joan: 18 years old, Vancouver

iii) Need or Desire for Money

There were only three women who said that they left school because they needed the money. Jennifer left three years ago to work as a waitress in a doughnut shop, but at the time of the interview she was home with her baby. Unemployed and without money, she and her boyfriend lived with her mother and stepfather.

Another woman who left school because she needed the money was from a Greek family in Montreal. At the age of fifteen, Carla was working a 12-hour day in her parents' restaurant as a cashier and waitress for $80 a month. She said that she was doing this to help her parents get out of debt, and explained her low income by saying:

> "They are deliberately making me work hard for low money, so I'll go back to school, I think."
>
> Carla: 15 years old, Montreal

iv) Pregnancy or Marriage

Despite widespread publicity about the availability of contraception and abortion, there are still some teenage women who become pregnant while in school. While the rates of teenage pregnancy have actually declined over the past twenty years, the proportion of teen mothers who are keeping their babies and not marrying has increased considerably.[18] In our study, there were only six teen mothers, and only three left school explicitly because they were pregnant. However, despite the small numbers in the sample, their situation clearly

illustrates what can be the consequences of leaving school early if the young woman then becomes pregnant or if she is already pregnant.

Of the teen mothers in the study, four out of six came from lower SES backgrounds and five of the six had experienced parental divorce or death. Their families had a series of problems such as alcoholism, unemployment, and poor parent-daughter relationships in addition to low income and divorce. All of the teen mothers were school leavers (i.e., they left school before graduation). Education was not a big factor in their goals at this point; what they wanted was a stable home environment and/or a relationship with a partner. Although three girls said that they wanted to get off welfare and become self-supporting, they tended to focus on other goals in their discussions of the future:

> (In the next two years) "I just want to be happy . . . for my daughter to be healthy." (In five years) "I want to be married to my boyfriend, to have another kid . . . to be travelling."
>
> Sarah: 18 years old, Toronto

> (In the next two years) "Get married. Having a family of my own is what I want most."
>
> Sue: 19 years old, rural Nova Scotia

For those teen mothers who wanted to return to school, practical problems plagued them. Feelings of rejection by the school system, lack of time and money, and poor relationships with their parents and the child's father seemed to immobilize them. So much time and energy had to be spent caring for their child that they had little impetus to leave the home.

The fact that several of the teenage mothers were involved in programs at the YWCA or other transition houses for women was a step in the direction of planning their future and attempting to improve their present lives. These organizations offered "teen moms" informal group discussions on relationships, baby care, financial planning, returning to school, and looking for a job. Although few were aware that having a child during adolescence tends to have a very

negative impact on future education and employment,[19] they all knew that they needed assistance. Five of the six teen mothers were on welfare.

Several lower SES girls saw marriage or cohabitation as a good reason to quit school. Sarah, an 18-year-old separated mother, said that she quit school two years ago:

> "...because my husband made me... He wanted me to run away with him and get married (giggle)."
>
> Sarah: 18 years old, Toronto

Later in the interview, the same woman said that her goal in life was to have six children by the time she was thirty years old.

b) School Leavers: Planning for the Future

Although we did not have a specific question on philosophy towards life, we got the impression that many non-students who left before graduation (school leavers) were very fatalistic. They seemed to think that life just happens, and you deal with it. This was particularly apparent with the issue of contraception as evidenced by the teen mothers (none of whom graduated from high school). Only one told the interviewer that her baby was "planned" and when we asked what they would do if they got pregnant again, they all answered that they would have the baby. None of them said that they wouldn't get pregnant again because they were using birth control (an answer given by some of the higher SES girls).

Many of the school leavers were very strongly oriented towards the present as were a minority of the students. They found it very difficult to imagine life in the future. When we asked them what they thought they would be doing in five years, some had no idea. Here are comments from two lower SES school leavers which illustrate this:

> "I have no idea... I don't make plans... I don't make decisions. I wait until things happen, until they develop."
>
> Joan: 18 years old, Vancouver

"I really couldn't tell you! I don't think much about the future."

Joanne: 15 years old, rural Ontario

Sarah, an eighteen-year-old teen mother in Toronto, who was living on welfare at the time of the interview, said that she hoped to be "working with computers" in five years. Later in the interview she told us that she spends her days looking after the baby, watching soap operas on television, reading Harlequin romances, and going for walks. Although she expressed a desire to be financially self-sufficient, with Grade 10 education she has a long way to go to complete her high school. She had started a correspondence course in accounting, but found that she was too tired at the end of the day to work on it. However, she said that she planned to take a "preparation course next year to return to high school".

Although most of these young people expressed an interest in upgrading their education, they felt powerless to do anything about it. Sometimes they lacked the knowledge of where to start. In other cases, they lacked the motivation. Many saw winning the lottery as the solution to their problems. This was a recurrent theme throughout all social backgrounds, but was particularly prevalent among non-students and for those of lower SES adolescents. A heavy reliance on luck or fate has been found among poorer adolescents in other studies as well.[20] Here is an example of a young man who had left school early, and who seemed to feel powerless to control his future:

(What do you think that you will be doing in five years?) "I don't know . . . How am I supposed to know? . . . I'd like to win a million bucks from Lottario!"

Bob: 19 years old, Toronto

After leaving school, some adolescents realized just how important education is to finding a job. For example, Joan from Vancouver, with Grade 9 education, said:

"I'm going to get an education, because I don't like not having it. It lessens your marketability . . . If you don't have

Grade 12, if you're a drop-out, they think you're unmotivated. They are less likely to hire you."

Joan: 18 years old, Vancouver

D. Educational Plans

Although a woman who has left high school before graduation is far less likely to find a well-paying job than a woman who continues her education, even the female university graduate is paid less for her education than the male university graduate.[21] There are several reasons for this. Women tend to enrol in courses and programs which lead to traditionally "female" job categories, which generally pay less. They are less likely to specialize in the highly paid segments of certain professions and more likely than men to work part time. Women often choose to spend more time on other aspects of their lives, such as their children and their households. However, even when women want to find high-paying jobs, they can more easily locate employment within the lower paying "pink collar" ghettoes of clerical work, retail sales, and service work. Often, they cannot find full-time jobs with higher wages and benefits, but are forced to work part time. Even when their educational aspirations are high and they graduate from college or university, women experience more difficulty than men do in finding paid work, keeping their jobs, and getting promoted. Also, at any level of training or type of job, women can be impeded by discriminatory practices in hiring, pay, and promotion.

In our sample, we found that females' educational aspirations were just as high as males. Over three quarters of the female students in the sample planned to continue their education beyond high school. If we break this down by university and college, we find that 56% wanted to go to university and 30% wanted to attend some sort of college (community college, secretarial college, art college). This was slightly higher than the figures for males (see Table 4).

If we compare the students who said they wanted to go to university and college in our study with the actual proportions enrolling in these institutions in Canada, we find that in 1982 about 22% of 18- to 24-year-olds were enrolled in

post-secondary institutions. Slightly less than half of these were females. The higher the degree in university, the fewer women enrol if we look at all disciplines combined.[22] In our study, more girls planned to attend college and university than will probably actually enrol. Either our adolescents are being unrealistic in their plans, or their aspirations are higher than earlier studies would suggest. It may well be that both factors are true.

Table 4: Educational Aspirations of Male and Female Students in Study

	Female	Male
University	55.9% (52)	50.0% (11)
College*	30.1% (28)	27.3% (6)
Paid job after high school	14.0% (13)	22.7% (5)
Total**	100% (93)	100% (22)

* Includes art colleges, secretarial colleges, polytechnical institutes, CEGEPs, and community colleges.

** Ten students were too uncertain of their future plans to be included in this table.

If we divide the girls from our study into those with higher educational aspirations and those with lower aspirations, we can see more clearly the backgrounds likely to lead to each.

1. Higher Educational Aspirations

In comparing the educational aspirations of adolescents, there is always a problem because young people start from different family backgrounds. For the student from a high SES family, going to university is usually a personal and parental expectation rather than something unusual. However, for a young person whose parents have lower education and income, planning to attend university can require unusual ambition and determination. Although the young people from lower SES families often experience parental pressure to go to college or university (to "do better" than the parents themselves did), insufficient money, few role models, and lack of encouragement from the school system may make their ambition difficult to realize. However, we will provide examples from the interviews of those whose educational ambitions were much higher than those of their parents, whatever the background or expectations of those parents may be.

Since 78% of the students in our study planned to continue their education beyond high school, we decided to make the cut-off point in distinguishing between higher and lower educational ambitions that between wanting to go to university or to college. Those who planned to go to university were deemed to have "higher" aspirations than those who planned to go to college or directly into the labour force. We made this decision because requirements are often higher and courses longer and more costly in university.

Those with "higher" educational aspirations planned to attend university directly after they graduated from high school, although a few considered the possibility of travelling or working for a year. Over 50% of the students planned to attend university, with about equal proportions of males and females. However, the subjects they chose were somewhat different. The boys more often chose engineering, electronics, architecture, and science subjects. The girls focused on languages, the humanities, psychology, education, nursing, and medicine. About three quarters of the girls planned to attend their local university or one near their home, while the others were concerned with finding the "best" university for their subject. This sometimes meant leaving the province or even the country. On the other hand, nearly three quarters of the boys planned to attend a college or university in another city or province.

Although students from all social backgrounds wanted to go to university, those from wealthier, more educated, professional families were most likely to make this choice. This was true for both males and females in the study. For example, 82% of girls with professional working mothers planned to go to university while 58% of girls with clerical mothers, 53% of daughters of housewives, and 21% of girls with mothers who had manual labour jobs in the labour force had this ambition (see Table 5). While 76% of daughters of managerial or professional fathers had higher educational aspirations, 33% of daughters of fathers with lower status occupations wanted to go to university (see Table 6). This indicates that, for the girls we talked to, the occupation of the mother is more influential than the occupation of the father in the educational ambitions of the daughter. Professionally employed mothers seemed particularly to serve as a role model for their daughters to go to university. By "role model" we mean a positive image that the daughter wants to emulate.

Table 5: Daughter's Educational Plans, by Mother's Occupation

	Daughter's Educational Plans				
	University (%)	College (%)	Job (%)	Total (%)	Total number of girls
Mother's Occupation					
Professional	82.4	11.8	5.9	18.5	(17)
Sales, Clerical or Service	58.1	32.3	9.7	33.7	(31)
Housewife	53.3	26.7	20.0	32.6	(30)
Manual labour	21.4	57.1	21.4	15.2	(14)
Total %	55.4	30.4	14.1	100	
Total number of girls	(51)	(28)	(13)	—	(92)

Table 6: Daughter's* Educational Plans, by Father's Occupation

	Daughter's Educational Plans			
	University	College	Work after high school	Total
Father's Occupation				
Higher status**	75.5% (37)	18.4% (9)	6.1% (3)	55.1% (49)
Lower status	32.5% (13)	45.0% (18)	22.5% (9)	44.9% (40)
Total	56.2% (50)	30.3% (27)	13.5% (12)	100% (89)

* Includes only female students who gave information about their father's job.

** Higher status includes professional, managerial, and technical positions. Lower status includes sales, service, skilled and unskilled labour, farmer, retired or unemployed.

Mothers from all social backgrounds gave their daughters strong verbal encouragement to stay in school. Here is an example of what several girls said their mothers told them about their education. In this first example, Frances' mother has a post-graduate university degree and a managerial position in a social work agency. Frances herself expects to go to university to become a social worker:

> "My parents expect me to go to university . . . my mom has encouraged me in my artistic stuff. Last year, my mom pushed me to get a job. I resented that a lot. My mom also told me about computers, so I consider that . . ."
>
> Frances: 17 years old, Winnipeg

Bev, whose mother has some high school education and works as a housekeeper in a hotel, has no clear idea of what she wants to do in the future:

> "My mother. She says it plain. 'Stay in school or get out!' Yes, I'm staying in school for myself."
>
> Bev: 16 years old, Dartmouth

Lynda's mother has Grade 10 education, is divorced, and has supported her children for ten years on a secretarial job. Lynda wants to go to university and become a psychiatrist:

> "My mother has drilled it into me that I should be the front end of the horse and not the back end. She doesn't care what I do. She thinks I should do something I like, but at least finish high school."
>
> Lynda: 15 years old, Toronto

Girls with higher educational ambitions in our study also tended to be younger on average than those with lower ambitions. Studies have suggested that high school girls actually lower their educational aspirations, by their own standards, as they approach the end of high school, to conform to prevailing standards of the kinds of work women are expected to do.[23]

Those with higher educational ambitions tended to admire women – such as women doctors, scientists, politicians or business women – who had accomplished something outside the home and its standard roles. They noted these women's skills and knowledge, the respect they commanded from others, and their ability to succeed "in a man's world". Here are some of the comments from the girls with higher aspirations about famous women they admired. All these girls come from professional homes:

> "Margaret Thatcher, because she is in control. She's strong-willed . . . the top dog!"
>
> Marina: 15 years old, Montreal

"Nellie McClung. Don't explain and don't apologize! Just get the deed done and let them know!"

Frances: 17 years old, Winnipeg

"A lawyer, with a good reputation . . . and well-known. People come to her for advice. She's active, and enjoys making decisions. She's outspoken."

Chris: 15 years old, rural Ontario

"Someone who's succeeded without any pushing . . . a business owner. She's succeeded because of her own talent." (translation)

Lise: 15 years old, rural Quebec

These girls with higher educational ambitions were also more likely to be involved in clubs or organizations, especially those which might relate to their future work. For example, Laura W., from a high SES family in Vancouver, belonged to the Vancouver Art Gallery, Greenpeace, the French Club, the Outdoors Club, and used to be in the United Nations Club. In five years she planned the following:

"I'll be going to school in an English place, where I can really crack down – like Oxford or Cambridge."

Laura W.: 17 years old, Vancouver

The girls with higher educational aspirations also watched less television than others, read more (including non-fiction and newspapers), and placed less emphasis on relationships with the opposite sex in their discussions of the future. Although most girls in the study wanted to marry and have children, the ones with higher educational aspirations were doubtful of the desirability of early marriage and early child-bearing. Here are some of their comments on this last point:

(At the age of thirty) " . . . maybe I'll live with a male, or alone. I'll probably not be married . . . probably no

kids . . . I might be an archaeologist or a writer . . ."

Julia: 15 years old, Montreal

(At the age of thirty) ". . . I'll probably be living with a male, maybe married, maybe not. I probably won't have children then but I want three sometime . . . I'll be living in Toronto, New York or London . . . I might work for a newspaper as an editor or columnist, or in the theatre, or at External Affairs . . ."

Andrea: 16 years old, Toronto

An example of one of the girls with higher educational aspirations was Marina, a 15-year-old Jewish girl with an Eastern European background. She lived in Montreal, and went to a private girl's school. Her mother, who is a medical doctor, and her brother have both encouraged her to study medicine and become a doctor, but Marina would prefer to do medical research. With family support and a well-off and well-educated family, there is every reason why this young woman would set her ambitions high and succeed.

To summarize, those with higher educational ambitions tended to come from high SES parents who had university degrees themselves or who at least valued education. These girls had detailed plans for the future, with strong ideas about the importance of paid work and financial independence. With money and moral support that come from their families, these are the girls who are most likely to realize their educational plans.

Despite the trend for higher SES girls to have higher educational ambitions, 21% of the daughters of manual labouring mothers and 33% of daughters of fathers with sales, service or labour jobs planned to go to university. These girls, given their family's financial situation, had very high educational ambitions. Let us look at a few of these girls.

Vicki, a Toronto girl from an Italian background, was determined to go to university to become an elementary school teacher. Her parents were factory workers, were virtually illiterate in their first language, and were opposed to higher education for women. She said that her parents:

"... think that it is a waste of time for women to go to university, because they will only get married and get pregnant and stay home ... they want me to be an X-ray technician like my sister."

Vicki: 17 years old, Toronto

Sixteen-year-old Lisette, a French-Canadian girl from rural Quebec, wanted to go to university and become a doctor. Her parents had only elementary education but supported her ambition. She was in Secondaire V with a 92% average. Her favourite subjects were chemistry and biology. She had a group of friends who discussed the future quite often, and she also discussed her career plan with a neighbour who was a teacher and with her boss (female) from a summer job.

Sixteen-year-old Elda from a Portuguese family in Ottawa also had higher educational aspirations. Her mother was virtually illiterate in Portuguese as well as in English and her father had Grade 4 education. However, they both supported their daughter's ambitions. Elda told the interviewer that her favourite subjects were science and math and that she planned to go to St. Francis Xavier University to study marine biology. She had even been to the guidance office to find out about universities. Although she had unsuccessfully tried to be introduced to a marine biologist through the guidance department, she intended to try again. When asked if she would go back to the guidance office, she said:

"Yes, I still haven't really understood about marine biology, so I would go back."

The person she most wanted to emulate was a female marine biologist she saw on television:

"She's married to a marine biologist ... they travel and do research ... they even have their own boat."

Elda: 16 years old, Ottawa

Of course, whatever their background, some adolescents seemed to have unrealistic or contradictory aspirations for the future. For example, Ada, a

17-year-old girl from Toronto, wanted to get a Ph.D. in psychology, and travel and lecture around the world. Her parents had little education themselves, but they were pushing her to succeed. She said that her father wanted her to go into law or medicine. However, she had only a C average in Grade 12 which might already make entry to university and further training difficult.

Also, not all girls who did have a number of social and economic advantages had higher educational aspirations. For example, Daniella, a fifteen-year-old private school girl from Toronto who had highly educated parents and a professionally employed mother,wanted to take a year off, get an apartment, and take a "menial job". With her "punk" hairstyle and clothes, she was clearly rebelling against her parents' middle-class expectations to "go to law school and marry a lawyer".

Although many of the adolescents of both sexes in our study knew that they needed to continue their education in order to find a well-paying job, they sometimes were reluctant to spend their youth studying, and understandably so. Their decision to go to university or college was often seen as "job training" rather than broadening their intellectual capacities. But it was also rather romantically viewed as an opportunity to liven up their social lives, to party, and to get away from home. Others planned to continue on to university merely because their parents and teachers expected it, and not because they themselves wanted to.

2. Lower Educational Aspirations

We defined "lower educational aspirations" as planning to attend college, or going directly into the work force after high school. If we refer back to Table 5, we can see that a larger proportion of girls with these plans come from homes with non-professional working mothers or housewives, and with fathers who hold manual labour jobs. Generally, lower educational aspirations for both sexes were related to a lower socioeconomic background but there were some exceptions of girls such as Elda who wanted to become a female marine biologist.

Many studies have suggested that lower family income diminishes educational ambitions.[24] It is important to note that when we look at Canadian statistics on how income varies with family size, ethnicity, and rural-urban living, we could conclude that the reason French Canadians, Native people, rural adolescents, and those with large families tend to have lower educational aspirations is that, on the average, these groups tend to have lower annual incomes.[25] Lack of money or a combination of low income and a long distance from educational facilities may discourage young people from hoping to continue their education. This seemed to be true of many similarly situated girls we interviewed.

The girls with lower educational ambitions were often more concerned with forming and keeping relationships with the opposite sex, looked forward to early marriage, and anticipated having a house of their own as soon as possible. These girls were ambitious in these aspects of their lives, and they saw these and many other interests and goals taking priority over their education. They often did not see leaving school before graduation as a problem. Here are some comments which show the strong orientation towards relationships and family life from those with lower educational aspirations:

> (When I'm 21) ". . . I'll be living in California with my boyfriend . . . I'll have three kids."
>
> Donna: 16 years old, Montreal

> (At 21) "I won't be living at home, I'll be in my own apartment with my boyfriend . . . I hope to have my first child by 21!"
>
> Deb: 19 years old, Toronto

Girls with lower educational ambitions were also more likely than others to watch soap operas on television and read romantic novels. In contrast to the girls with higher aspirations who admired political and scientific women, those with lower aspirations most admired television personalities, movie stars, royalty or popular singers. Here are some illustrations of those they admired and why:

"Brooke Shields. I admire her, but wouldn't want to be her. She's **beautiful**, has a nice body . . . nice clothes."

Rosemary: 16 years old, Toronto

"Diana Ross . . . she has everything! Money, a kid. She's famous and is happy!"

Deb: 19 years old, Toronto

"Chantal Pary (singer) because she is famous . . . she has a happy marriage. She looks after her children . . . also Renée Martel. She's a singer who's famous yet down-to-earth. She's not married and she's raising her son alone . . ." (translation)

Michelle: 19 years old, rural Quebec

Generally speaking, the factor most related to lower educational aspirations for both sexes is coming from a lower SES family in which the parents themselves did not complete high school. Girls with low ambitions tended to have mothers who were not in the paid labour force or who were in unskilled jobs they disliked. In terms of pursuing their education and using it for paid employment, the girls lacked role models from their mothers. These girls tended to want to marry younger, to have children at a younger age, and to hope to improve their lives through marrying men who could provide them with a better lifestyle. Winning the lottery was also an important hope. They often admired beauty, wealth, and fame more than knowledge or achievement. With the high costs of education and priority often given to their brothers' education,[26] these girls have adjusted their educational plans to the reality of their situation.

3. Barriers to Achieving their Educational Goals

Although adolescents may want to go to university and have a professional career, many things can interfere with these goals. Some of the barriers to achieving one's goals can be anticipated ahead of time, but others may be unexpected. Such factors as rising entrance requirements in university, high tuition fees, inability to find summer employment to finance one's education, a

death in the family or limited academic ability are all the type of barriers that cannot easily be controlled. There are also personal or psychological barriers. Lack of motivation to study, the desire to leave school to get married or find a job, lack of self-confidence or unrealistic planning can prevent adolescents from achieving their goals.

In the interviews, we asked the adolescents what they thought could possibly prevent them from going as far in school as they wanted to. Their answers ranged from lack of money, early pregnancy or marriage, loss of interest in school, poor grades, and discrimination (because of their race or sex). Since most adolescents mentioned the lack of money and early pregnancy or marriage more often than other factors, we will deal with these separately. Other barriers to completing their education will then be discussed with some examples from the interviews.

a) Financial Barriers to Completing Their Education

The most frequently stated potential barrier to completing their education given by both sexes was the lack of money. Twenty-four per cent of the females and 21% of the males gave this answer. Girls may be short of money because, although more held part-time jobs than boys (41% of the girls and 29% of the boys), the wages of the girls were lower. We also got the impression from another question on who tended to give them educational advice, that a number of parents are more supportive of their sons' education and may be more likely to finance it. However, we would need to ask this question explicitly in future studies to be able to provide exact details on this issue.

Not unexpectedly, students from poorer families were decidedly worried about finding the money to complete their schooling. The difficulty of finding summer jobs, the rising cost of tuition fees and books, unemployment in the family, and the necessity of financially assisting their own family made it difficult for many students to stay in school. For example, Clara, an immigrant girl from Vietnam, lived in Vancouver with her family on welfare. Although her father used to be a businessman in his own country, at the time of the interview he was

disabled and could not work. Clara was in Grade 12 and had no part-time job. When asked what could prevent her from finishing school, she answered:

> "My family not having enough money. Money is the biggest problem. The only other thing is getting discouraged because so hard it is to write English . . . I may be drop-out".
>
> Clara: 18 years old, Vancouver

However, poorer adolescents were not the only ones who worried about the lack of money interfering with their education. In fact, more females (but not males) from higher SES families than from lower SES families worried about the shortage of money for their education. Since these girls planned to go to university for four or more years and generally had poorly paid part-time jobs, they were financially dependent on their parents. They worried that they would be forced to quit school because of something happening to their parents. Here are some of their comments:

> (What could possibly prevent you from going as far in school as you want?) "Money. Not that I have that problem now. My parents will pay. But if something happened to them or if I didn't want to take the money from them anymore. I couldn't study if I was working full time. . ."
>
> Laura W.: 17 years old, Vancouver

> "Not enough money . . . but I may inherit it. I guess it's not really a concern, but . . ."
>
> Mirian: 17 years old, Toronto

b) Pregnancy and Marriage as Barriers to Completing Their Education

Twenty-one per cent of the young women in the study gave pregnancy or early marriage as a hypothetical reason why they might not complete their education. Some felt that if they met someone they "really loved", they might decide to quit school and get married. Few seemed to think that they might be able to do both at the same time.

If pregnancy might interfere with education, why not practise abstinence or birth control or agree to an abortion? When we asked the adolescents what they would do if they or their partner got pregnant by accident, we found that 28% of the girls would have an abortion, and half would keep the baby and try to raise it alone. This latter figure is in line with current evidence which shows that while the percentage of teens getting pregnant is not increasing, 80% are now keeping their babies.[27] In our study, few girls seemed to be aware of the difficulties of being a single mother, but expected that "someone" would help them out financially and emotionally. Although several girls suggested that their mothers would help them raise the child, we cannot know how the mothers, often in the paid work force themselves, would react to this.

Many adolescents, especially those from lower SES families, seemed to feel that pregnancy was difficult to avoid and was something they must "plan around". For example, Clara, the 18-year-old who was concerned about money, said that if she got pregnant by accident:

> "I'd keep the child . . . I'd raise it with my mother. She can help . . . No. I don't think that would happen (that her mother could help). I'd get away, move to another province where they don't know me. I'd tell my mom, and if she accepted, I'd live with her . . . If she didn't, I'd go away."
>
> Clara: 18 years old, Vancouver

Only 7% of the adolescents explicitly said that they would not get pregnant "by accident" because they would make sure it did not happen. Both males and females seemed to worry about unexpected pregnancy, implying that they were insufficiently familiar with contraceptive methods, lacked confidence in the effectiveness of these methods, or were hesitant in initiating their use. We will discuss these issues in more detail in Chapter 4.

c) Other Barriers to Completing Their Education

Developing unrealistic plans for the future is in itself a barrier to realizing future goals. The adolescent who makes unrealistic plans is in a similar position to one who makes no plans at all. Sometimes, judging the realism of a plan

is merely a matter of opinion, but in other cases it is obvious that there is little congruence with reality in a future scenario. For example, Gail, a lower SES girl in Vancouver, wanted to be "a vet . . . for panthers and lions" but seemed to be unaware of the qualifications needed for this job. Glenda, with C- grades in a Toronto high school, said that she planned to be a medical doctor. Carla, from a lower SES family in Montreal, wanted to live in Switzerland with her mother and her boyfriend and fix airplanes for a living, but mentioned no training for this job.

Some of the unrealistic plans came from those adolescents who lacked knowledge of the "real world" and who simply did not realize how impractical their ideas were. They did not know about entrance requirements for university, or understand the demands of the labour market. Achieving their goals may be impossible simply because their plans were too unrealistic, and time goes too quickly to learn by mistakes. Those who presented future scenarios that seemed to be impractical and unrealistic tended to come from less educated and poorer families, or those who were distressed by parental death, divorce, alcoholism, or other family problems.

Another barrier to realizing their goals was lack of confidence. Lack of confidence in one's abilities can be an important factor in reducing motivation and ambition. If you think you might not make it, you might give up and try something easier. Despite the fact that girls' grades in school were as high as those of boys, girls tended to worry more than boys about their grades and their ability to get into university. Thinking that they lacked the ability to do well, girls tended to be less confident than the boys in discussing their educational plans. For example, Elaine, a private school girl from Montreal with an 84% average, gave the following answer to what might prevent her from going as far in school as she wanted:

". . . being too stupid to get into university."

Elaine: 17 years old, Montreal

Fifteen-year-old Dana from a prestigious private school in Toronto, who received an 80% average, answered in a similar way:

". . . not being good enough (to get into law school)."

Dana: 15 years old, Toronto

This type of answer, in which they questioned their own abilities, was more common for the girls than for the boys who emphasized the tough competition for university entrance. Realization that relatively few women graduate from medical or law school also seemed to worry girls as they approached the latter grades of high school. We will talk more about perception of discrimination and lack of confidence as a barrier to achievement in the chapter on work.

Another barrier to completing their education which was explicitly given by the females in the interviews was lack of motivation. Lack of motivation could be related to lack of confidence, but it could also be a result of a confusing time of life or an indication of other priorities emphasized in the home. One example of a girl who gave such an answer was 18-year-old Joan, a school leaver from Vancouver. She came from divorced parents and had lived with her mother on welfare for many years. She said "lack of motivation, not caring enough" might prevent her from upgrading her education from the present Grade 9 level. However, in an earlier question, she said that she wanted to be a social worker, which would require at least a college degree.

Although less than 10% of the sample gave lack of motivation as a primary reason for limiting their education, more gave it as a second or third reason. Sometimes they expressed it like this:

". . . if I get sick of it (school)."

". . . pushing other things in higher priority."

". . . if I get turned off to the idea."

An additional reason for not completing school was dissatisfaction with the school system. Although only a few adolescents gave such comments, some expressed it very articulately. For example, Anne-Marie, an immigrant from South America living in Montreal, left school in Secondaire V. When asked why, she said:

"It was a new comprehensive high school. I had a lot of trouble getting used to it. I was angered by the type of teaching given there. Also, I suffered from the fact that we didn't have a lot of money as a couple (she lived with her boyfriend). In school there is no more motivation or sensitization. The young people have to be put in contact with one another . . . The schedules should be planned differently so that young people have part of the day free to develop themselves." (translation)

Anne-Marie: 18 years old, Montreal

She went on to say that she learned more from her work at the community radio station than in school, certainly a thought-provoking comment.

d) No Barriers to Completing Their Education

Very few girls and boys saw no barriers to getting as much education as they wanted. Fifteen girls and only one boy saw no barriers to completing their education. Some were just being realistic, given the family support they would undoubtedly receive. However, regardless of background, other girls' aspirations seemed to be raised by the increasingly correct idea that women need as much education as men in order to support themselves. Although a few of these acknowledged that there might be unexpected problems such as lack of money or even unanticipated pregnancy, they felt that they could overcome such obstacles. For example, Velda, a 16-year-old immigrant from the West Indies living in a Toronto women's hostel, told us that nothing would interfere with her going to college to become a legal secretary. She held strong views about the desirability and importance of women being financially independent. In her scenario of the future, she intended to have a full-time job and a child, but no husband. In that this pattern is not unusual among lower income West Indians,[28] single parenthood in her case may not have as adverse an effect on her future as it might for a girl who is going against the traditional values of her own cultural group by being an unmarried working mother.

Another young woman with higher aspirations who saw no barrier to completing her education was Lynda, a 15-year-old living in Toronto. She came from divorced parents and lived with her mother, who had been working as a

secretary for the past ten years. Lynda felt that nothing would stop her from going to university and becoming a psychiatrist. When asked what women she admired, she said:

> "Margaret Thatcher . . . she's so good at decision making. And the fact that she got into that position. It's hard for a woman . . . I'd love to be the prime minister of our country."
>
> Lynda: 15 years old, Toronto

A few other students who saw no barriers to completing their education were probably just being realistic. For example, Kathy, a 16-year-old girl from a middle-income home in Toronto, planned to go into pharmacy. With a 90% average and plenty of moral and financial support from her parents, there should be little to prevent her from realizing that goal. Seventeen-year-old Susan was presently in Grade 12 and had a 77% average. After completing high school, she wanted to work as a bank clerk. Since her father was a bank manager and had plenty of contacts, there were no apparent reasons why she wouldn't finish school and find a job.

A few additional students said that nothing would interfere with their education, but later added that if they found a "really good job", they might drop out of university. Eighteen per cent of the males and only 2% of the females made this suggestion. However, most of them realized that in the present labour market, this is very unlikely to happen, given the need to upgrade one's education or skills.

E. Conclusion: The Role of Education in Future Plans

Thus, we have seen the strong value which adolescents place on education. Sixty-five per cent of all adolescents in the study, and 78% of those in school at the time of the interview, planned to go to college or university. To these adolescents, education was clearly linked with future job prospects. Fifty-three per cent planned to have a professional job at the age of thirty, and most believe that with their degree or diploma, they would have little difficulty finding such a job.

Interestingly, the educational aspirations of the young women in the study were slightly higher than those of the young men. Eighty-six per cent of the female students who knew what they wanted to do after high school planned to continue their education compared to 77% of the male students. Males were more likely to think of leaving high school and moving directly into the labour force, as they could more easily earn a living with unskilled manual labour jobs.

Although about one quarter of the girls said that they would probably be housewives at the age of thirty, most saw this as a temporary occupation. They still planned to finish school, go to college or university, and work before marriage and child-bearing and after their children were in school. In particular, those girls with mothers in the paid labour force planned to take only a maternity leave, rather than to leave the labour force for any extended period of time. A few who came from divorced parents also anticipated the possibility of a divorce, which would mean that they would have to be self-supporting. (We will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 4 on personal life.) Going to college or university in order to get a better job was definitely the goal of most of these adolescents.

However, what are their chances of getting into university? With a growing demand for post-secondary education, some institutions are raising their entrance requirements. Since government funding has not increased in proportion to the demand, attendance at university in the near future may become increasingly difficult. Many adolescents will simply not be able to get in or be able to continue paying their way once in. Although few anticipated it, they may have to return to school to upgrade their qualifications, or attend night school later in their lives. Since most of them see education as being completed before entering the labour force, many will have to revise their plans. Certainly by the age of thirty, they will not all be settled into professional or highly paid positions, as many anticipated.

In the next chapter we will look at the kind of work which adolescents presently do, and the type of work they expect to be doing in the future.

CHAPTER 3
WORK: THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

> "My father wants me to go into the computer field, but I don't listen. He doesn't want me to be a nurse (which Leone wants to do), because the money is poor. My mother just wants me to get more education than she did."
>
> Leone: 19 years old, Toronto

A. Introduction

Social scientists have usually considered "work" to be something a person does for pay. It is also accepted that the way people support themselves is closely related to how they are socially defined or how other people treat them. For example, doctors have been given more deference and more pay than file clerks have. Although "work" was most often seen as mental or physical labour which one did for pay, feminist researchers maintain that what women do for their families in the home should also be considered as work.[1]

In addition to working in the paid labour force, often in positions with low prestige and pay, women have spent great portions of their lives working inside the home, without direct remuneration and often without real recognition and/or appreciation. Even though women's domestic work has been crucial to the social and economic well-being of the family and society, it has thus not always been seen as a true occupation, even by women themselves. Some adolescents in our study did not even consider that their mothers were working or had an occupation when they raised four children and maintained the home. As one girl commented:

> (What is your mother's present occupation?) "She doesn't have one!"
>
> Cheryl: 16 years old, Vancouver

Although women have always worked, their jobs have usually provided insufficient income to support themselves and their children. Reliance on the husband's income, low rates of pay in the labour force, sporadic paid work due to family responsibilities, and unequal access to family assets upon the breakdown of marriages in most provinces becomes a problem for women, especially older ones. As Table 1 shows, the percentage of elderly women without husbands living in a low-income situation is extremely high, as is the percentage of female family heads in the younger group. Part of the reason for this is that housework is not considered to be an occupation with wages or benefits which usually accompany work and thus a woman may be very poor during her marriage. If divorce occurs, the likelihood of poverty increases. In either case, a woman receives neither wages nor a pension for housework. In addition to this, girls who expect to be housewives often do not make adequate plans to earn their own living. These facts clearly indicate that economic self-sufficiency is becoming more necessary for women.

In earlier studies of adolescents' plans for their futures, girls were sometimes considered as having "lower" aspirations than boys because they did not choose to work in the paid labour force. When they said that they wanted to stay home with their children or be a homemaker, this was interpreted as an indication of poorly developed occupational plans or lack of desire to work.[2] Because housework is not paid work, it was dismissed as not even being work.

In our study, both unpaid work in the home and paid work in the labour force are considered to be "work". Whether women choose to work full time in the labour force, part time for pay, or full or part time as a housewife, each type of work shapes their lives and gives it much of its character. However, paid work gives women financial independence, which some researchers have suggested increases their influence and power in the home.[3] When we interviewed the adolescents, we were interested in their actual experience with paid work, and their plans for future work both inside and outside the home.

Table 1: **Low-Income Families and Unattached Individuals, by Age and Sex of Head, preliminary estimates, 1982***

	65 and over (%)	Under 65 years (%)
Families		
Female head	24.6	48.2 **
Male head	10.2	9.9
Total	11.7	14.2
Unattached Individuals		
Female	60.4	32.2
Male	48.9	29.7
Total	57.7	30.9

Source: Calculated from National Council of Welfare, **Sixty-five and Older – A Report by the National Council of Welfare on the Incomes of the Aged** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, February 1984), p. 25, Table 13.

*These rates are based on the low-income cutoffs (1978 base) determined by Statistics Canada from an analysis of 1978 Family Expenditures data. According to this criteria, families who on average spend 58.5% of their income on food, shelter, and clothing are considered to be in low-income situations. This is Statistics Canada's most recent guideline on low-income level.

**This large percentage reflects the fact that these are often families with children, whose primary support is the female head.

Increasingly, married women are moving away from full-time homemaking into paid work.[4] In 1981, over 50% of married women were contributing to the family income with either full- or part-time jobs. The "breadwinner family", in which father earns the money and mother rears the children and does the housework, is rapidly being replaced by the "two-earner family".[5] Rising rates of women's paid employment have been related to a number of social and economic factors. For example, inflation and rising costs, especially of housing and rearing children, have pushed more married women into the labour

force than was the case two decades ago. An increase in the availability of part-time work, which has allowed women to combine housework and paid work, has accelerated this trend. In addition, an increase in the service sector of the labour force during the 1960s and 1970s opened new positions in clerical work, waitressing, child care, and low-level retail sales fields which are traditionally occupied by women. In times of high unemployment such as the 1980s, these traditional jobs may be the only ones women can find with any degree of ease.

Rising rates of female employment are also related to women's ability to control fertility as well as to the expansion of women's roles in society. With more women continuing their education, they are reluctant and at times unable to focus entirely on domestic work and child-rearing; women are also having fewer children. Increasingly, they want to be in the labour force and link their education to their work. There is a growing attitude which relates outside employment to personal fulfilment, while encouraging women to use their skills and education to earn money and independence. This pragmatic view of the value of education was well expressed in the words of Carla who came from a poor immigrant family:

> (What if you were married and your husband earned $50,000 a year?) "I'd still work. I wouldn't go to school to sit around and eat all day! . . . I don't need him (her future husband) to support me. That's why education is important!"
>
> Carla: 15 years old, Montreal

Despite the growth of the female labour force, women workers are clustered in low-level positions with few possibilities of promotion. For example, they have often worked part time, out of both choice and necessity, with no possibility of promotion and few fringe benefits. Their positions in retail sales, as clerical workers in offices and banks, or as assembly-line workers in textile or food-processing plants, have often been low-paid, seasonal or temporary, and seldom unionized. Women's work, sometimes labelled "pink collar work", has often replicated the tasks traditionally done in the home by the housewife: preparing and serving food, sewing, caring for children, and assisting men. The fact that more women are entering the labour force has not reduced the ghettoization of women's work, but rather has increased it.[6]

Recent technological changes in the labour force are jeopardizing some of the areas of work traditionally done by women. The "microtechnology revolution" has led to reduced staff in offices, banks, and telephone exchanges. Word processors, instant tellers, automated exchanges, and factory robots mean that workers are having to look elsewhere for employment.[7]

In addition to the changes brought about by the new technology, the decline in the birth rate has reduced the number of new positions for elementary school teachers. Many social service agencies and hospitals cannot afford to take on new staff because of cutbacks in funding. Many textile factories are moving to parts of the world with lower labour costs. All these changes affect the availability of those jobs which women have traditionally held.

But are adolescent women aware of these changes and the potential impact on their lives? Do they realize the need to be economically self-supporting or are they still depending on life-long financial support from their husbands?

The increasing proportion of women entering law, medicine, computer science, pharmacy, and management courses appears to indicate that women's choice of work is broadening. They are now more likely to enter post-graduate courses and programs less typical for women than was the case a decade ago. This implies that ongoing paid work is becoming more central to these young women's lives and they are less likely to see these kinds of jobs as stop-gaps to marriage or child-bearing. But will women graduates have an equal chance of finding jobs in their field? Will they have the same chances of getting promoted that male graduates have?

In this chapter we will look at what experiences adolescent women now have with paid work. We will also look at their knowledge, planning, and action related to the work they expect to be doing in the future.

B. Adolescents and Paid Work: What They Do Now

With extended years of school, rising costs of education, and more adolescents from poorer families in college and university, many young people need

to work for pay on a part-time basis and in the summer in order to remain in school.[8]

In our study, of the 150 adolescents interviewed, about one-half (50% of the girls and 46% of the boys) were working for pay at the time of the interview. Fifty-eight adolescents worked part time while they attended school (39%), eleven had left school and were working full time (7%), and four had left school and were working part time (3%). The remainder were either in school and not working part time (44%), or had left school and were unemployed (7%). (Table 2 shows the different proportions of student and non-students who worked part time and full time.) We will discuss the students' jobs first.

Table 2: Adolescents' Jobs, by School Status and Sex

1. Students (124)	Part-time job	Full-time job
103 Females	48% (50)	——
21 Males	38% (8)	——
Total	47% (58)	——

2. Non-Students (26)	Part-time job	Full-time job	Total working	Unemployed or not looking for work
19 Females	16% (3)	42% (8)	58% (11)	42% (8)
7 Males	14% (1)	43% (3)	57% (4)	43% (3)
Total	15% (4)	42% (11)	58% (15)	42% (11)

1. Students and Part-Time Work

Out of 124 students, 58 (47%) worked on a part-time basis while they attended school full time. Unexpectedly, a larger proportion of female students than male students worked after school (48% or fifty of the 122 females and 38% or eight of the 28 males).

Of the girls who worked part time while attending school, 20 (40%) did baby-sitting, a job which is usually sporadic and low-paying. This job was certainly not the first choice for most girls but rather was one of the few that they could find. Another twelve girls (24%) worked as sales clerks or cashiers, nine worked in offices doing clerical work (18%), three worked as waitresses (6%), three did farm work (6%), and the other three did a variety of jobs.

The eight boys who worked part time while attending school performed a wider range of jobs, including waiter, delivery person, paper carrier, salesperson, cashier, manual labourer, and sports instructor at the YMCA. The one boy who baby-sat worked more hours as a waiter.

Although most students worked about 10 hours a week, one student worked 30 hours and also attended high school. Girls were more likely than boys to find part-time jobs, but boys tended to work longer hours. (57% of the males and 47% of the females worked more than 10 hours a week.) This probably reflects the high proportion of girls working as occasional baby-sitters.

Although we expected that students from higher SES families would have **less need** to work part time while studying than students from lower SES families, we found that adolescents of both sexes who came from lower SES families were **less** likely than more financially well-off students to be working part time while attending school. Other studies have found this as well, and have suggested that adolescents from lower SES families find it more difficult to locate work. For one thing, they are perceived by middle-class interviewers as presenting themselves less favourably in an interview situation,[9] but they may also lack the employment contacts which seem to be so important. However, in our study, some of the lower SES adolescents also lived in remote rural areas which had few

employment opportunities. This could partially explain, for example, why the Native adolescents in our study were less likely to work part time than the others. Cultural misunderstandings and living in more isolated areas may have worked against them.

Without part-time work, some adolescents found it difficult to stay in school. Although the desire to work was strong, many young people could not find work. Here are some comments from the interviews:

> "All my girlfriends would like to work part time, but none of them can find jobs."
>
> Clara: 18 years old, Vancouver

> ". . . my stepfather has been unemployed for quite a while . . . I don't have a part-time job now . . ."
>
> Lois: 17 years old, Halifax

> (In two years) "I would like to find a part-time job as a cashier . . . and finish school." (translation)
>
> Marie-Claire: 15 years old, Montreal

Those young people who had parents with influential friends or parents in a position to hire their own children had an easier time finding part-time work, as the comments from the interviews illustrate:

> "I work in the family business fifteen to twenty hours a week . . . my brother as well . . . (What would you do if you couldn't get into electrical engineering as you plan to?) I'd work in the family business."
>
> David: 18 years old, rural Ontario

> (Do you have a part-time job?) "I work in my mother's company". (What do you do?) "Well . . . nothing much, I do a bit of . . . well, it's really just a tax deduction!"
>
> Dana: 15 years old, Toronto

In some cases, the high number of hours spent on part-time jobs interfered with achievement at school. For example, 19-year-old Leone from Sri Lanka worked 25 hours per week, did most of the housework for the family (because her mother also worked outside the home), and went to school. With four hours of sleep each night, her grades were not as high as she had expected. However, she was determined to earn enough money to go to college and become a nurse.

A number of students who worked part time said that they did their homework on the bus on the way to work, late at night, early in the morning, or not at all. Teachers are beginning to realize that after-school assignments must take into consideration the fact that many of the students work after school or on the weekends.[10]

Ideally, part-time work for a student should relate in some way to future employment aspirations, or at least assist students to clarify their job interests or develop some useful skills for the future. In our study, the part-time jobs held by adolescents of both sexes were in most cases quite unrelated to their future work plans, were low in pay, and were consistent with conventional patterns of sex-typing. By this we mean that most of the adolescents were involved in jobs which in the adult labour force are done mainly by workers of their own sex.

For those girls who aspired to clerical, sales or service positions when they finish school (23%), there was more of a link between their part-time or summer employment and their choice of future work. For example, one young woman who worked as a "girl Friday" and receptionist about fifteen hours a week aspired to an office job when she finished her education. Several girls who wanted to manage stores when they finished high school worked part time as sales clerks.

However, the relationship between part-time work and full-time work for those who aspired to professional jobs (about 53%) was more tenuous. It is very difficult for high school students to gain work experience in social work, teaching or medicine, or even to find out about the nature of the work unless they have a parent or acquaintance already in that job.

2. Non-Students and Paid Work

The situation of young people who have left school entirely deserves special attention. As we mentioned in the chapter on education, there is a clear relationship between leaving school before graduation and experiencing high unemployment rates. In our study, we interviewed twenty-six non-students. This included eight people who graduated from high school, and eighteen who left before graduation (six of the eighteen were now teen mothers). Fifty-eight per cent of the non-students were employed. Although the graduates (five females and three males) were more likely to find full-time work, both types of non-students experienced bouts of unemployment ranging from a few months to several years.

Of the twenty-six non-students, only eleven worked full time (42%). None of the teen mothers worked full time. Four non-students (including one teen mother) worked part time (15%) and the rest were unemployed (43%). Of the eight female full-time workers, two worked as waitresses, two as baby-sitters, two as sales clerks, one as a hairdresser, and one did crafts. Of the three girls who worked part time, two were baby-sitters and one was a cashier. In other words, their jobs were relatively low in prestige and pay and in future promotional possibilities. For example, one young woman worked in her parents' restaurant for twelve hours a day, and earned only $80 per month. Another girl worked only for room and board, looking after someone's children. Several non-students had experienced periods of unemployment between temporary jobs, and although they realized the importance of education, they were not all financially able or willing to return to the classroom.

Despite the fact that the jobs of all fifteen of the non-students were low-level ones, with low pay, and usually unrelated to their future aspirations, most held favourable attitudes to these positions. Here are some examples of their comments on their work:

> (The most important thing to me now is) "... my job. I'm getting managerial experience ... experience in public relations."
>
> Marilyn: 19 years old, Ottawa

(Why did you quit schooi?) "I wanted to be a hairdresser." (In two years) . . . my work will be the same. (At age thirty) "I would like to have my clientele at home; set up a small beauty parlour in my basement." (translation)

Lucielle: 19 years old, Montreal

"I would have wasted this year if I'd gone to university, so I'm glad I took the year off . . . my work is boring, though I like the money."

Brenda: 19 years old, Halifax

Obviously, any job was better to them than unemployment. The money they earned enabled them to pay for some of their daily needs and to be partially independent from their parents. Being financially self-sufficient or at least having some money of their own raised their self-esteem and confidence in their abilities. Those school leavers who were unemployed tended to be depressed and insecure about the future. Here are some of their comments:

"It's difficult. I'd like to continue my studies. I've worked in a factory and it's no joke . . . " (translation)

Anne-Marie: 18 years old, Montreal

(What if you couldn't find a job in the future?) "I'd be depressed! I'd probably deal (in drugs) or something!"

Bob: 19 years old, Toronto

However, the fact that many of their friends were unemployed took some of the pressure off them. Many realized that unemployment is a national problem for young people, rather than a personal problem.

C. Teen Mothers

The young women who were now teenage mothers existed in a taxing and often confusing world of unexpected and unfamiliar child care, little economic or social support, and little apparent opportunity to change any of this. All of the

six teen mothers had dropped out of school, and only one had a job. She worked part time in a retail store as a cashier. The other five were on welfare. With little money and low education, the possibility of hiring a sitter in order to look for work was extremely difficult. However, most were reluctant to leave their child and felt that they should stay at home for a few years. Even if they could find a job, they would probably earn less money than the baby-sitter would cost. Attempting to upgrade their education with correspondence courses and care for a baby at the same time was only possible for the most motivated and those with the most external help.

D. Looking for Work: Knowledge, Planning, and Action

Work often has two phases for young people, with a special difference for women. While still in school, many adolescents look for and find jobs which may or may not lead to permanent work in adult life. Boys then expect to move into a second phase of finding permanent paid work for their adult life. Most girls today consider two kinds of work: unpaid housework in the home and paid work. This paid work used to be intermittent and sometimes temporary, but increasingly is permanent. However, the paid and unpaid work must be coordinated and this presents difficulties and challenges of its own.

As adolescents, what do they know about the adult work world? What are their expectations and how do they set about to achieve them? In our study, 54% of the adolescents said that they would rely on their guidance counsellors before anyone else, not only for information about their education but also for advice about future jobs. About 16% would first turn to their parents for this sort of advice, and 7% would go to a person who already held the job they were interested in to find out more about the job. The other 18% would turn to siblings, friends, other relatives, or acquaintances to find out about future employment possibilities. Only 5% of the adolescents said that they would go to any of the government employment services **before** they used other sources to find out about future jobs.

Although most adolescents had definite ideas about where to turn for advice on their courses at school, they were less certain where to turn for employment advice. This was indicated mainly by repeated hesitance in answering our questions about paid work and by their brief and uninformed responses.

Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that adolescents knew that present unemployment rates were high, especially for inexperienced workers. They lamented the fact that they were not being given an opportunity to gain experience. Although a few were willing or financially able to do volunteer work or participate in training programs in order to get this job experience, most preferred to work for pay if they could find a job.

Parents were used as a resource for job information by 18% of the girls and 12% of the boys in our study. In particular, those girls with mothers who had professional jobs which they enjoyed turned to their mothers for advice about their future work. These girls were also more likely than the daughters of housewives or mothers with manual jobs to **listen** to their mother's advice. The advice mothers usually gave was to go to university and try to get a well-paying professional position. Here are two examples from the interviews about their mother's advice and whether or not they listen. The first girl's mother is a nurse, and the second girl's mother is a manual labourer.

> "My parents both want me to be a doctor. I listen. They have a lot of good ideas . . . "
>
> Rhonda: 16 years old, Montreal

> "My mom says finish school . . . (She laughs) We always say I'm going to be a doctor . . . No, I never listen to my mom. She contradicts herself, tells me do this and don't do this, and then she turns around and does it."
>
> Gail: 17 years old, Vancouver

The few adolescents who had part-time jobs related to their future work plans turned to their boss or co-workers to find out about future vacancies. Several had lined up permanent positions well before they left school. Work-study programs in which students work as part of their education seemed to give the

students confidence that they would be able to find work when they completed the program. Unfortunately, we could not follow up the success rate in this short study although there is a question as to whether programs at the secondary school level do in fact live up to the students' expectations by finding them permanent jobs.[11]

However, the high school work-study programs are usually geared only to those students who are assumed to be planning to enter the labour force after high school. For example, in our study, 16-year-old Bev from Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, whose father was an unemployed janitor and whose mother was a housekeeper in a hotel, was involved in a work-study program in which she worked in an office for a few hours a week. This girl, who achieved B- grades in Grade 10, was in a vocational program.

From the interviews, we found that many of the work-study programs provided typing jobs for girls in high school. While some people have suggested that employers see these programs as a way to find cheap labour, the students in our study, as well as in others,[12] were quite favourable to the idea. But even if girls are better able to find jobs after work-study programs, they may find themselves being orientated only towards "pink collar" jobs rather than a wider range of positions. Students may be better advised to stay in school and finish college or university, rather than entering a work-study program if it encourages them to leave school earlier for low-paying jobs. If women's traditional jobs could be upgraded with higher pay and greater promotional possibilities, this would not be such a problem.

Several students spoke of their desire to enter a work-study or "co-op" program in university, assuming that it would give them an "edge" in the tight labour market. If their school would help them find a job, they felt that they would be better off than the student with no institutional support.

For those not involved in a work-study program, reliance on informal networks was an important way of finding work. About 30% of the adolescents said that they would turn to friends, acquaintances or relatives (rather than professionals) to find out about future jobs. A number of students explicitly said "It's who you know" that's important in finding work. Those who knew potential

employers through their part-time jobs, their family or friends of the family seemed less concerned about finding future employment. For example, Andrea, from a professional family in Toronto, said that if she were looking for work she would go to:

> "...friends of the family who had that job. They know what it's like more than the guidance counsellor."
>
> Andrea: 16 years old, Toronto

Rather than turn to government resources in looking for future work, most of the adolescents in our study thought that it was better to rely on the guidance department and people they knew to help them make their occupational choices and to find out more details about the nature of the work. While their parents and friends often helped them focus their interests, the guidance department supplied them with details on entrance requirements or the qualifications needed for a particular kind of job they wanted in the future. However, finding out about the **actual** vacancies appeared to the adolescent to be a more difficult task, as they were aware of high unemployment rates. Since most of the adolescents in our study were not yet ready to look for permanent work, they seemed to feel that the important task in the meantime was to decide what work they wanted in the future, rather than how to find the specific vacancy.

E. Future Occupational Choices

The expectations for both paid and unpaid work were described in most detail by the adolescents when they were asked to envision a typical day in their life at the age of thirty. It is true that for many young people thirty seems a lifetime away, and thus their projections may have a vague or contradictory quality. Nevertheless, they do have ideas of what they want to do and who they want to be, and these ideas are an integral part of how they see their lives now and the circumstances under which they live.

Three quarters of the adolescents in our study planned to go to college or university and most of these expected to find positions directly related to their

studies. They assumed that they would find well-paid positions. Few anticipated that they would not be able to work directly in their field or that they would not be able to find work immediately. Many chose occupations that required expensive and long training, such as medical doctor or lawyer, and thought that their careers would be well under way at thirty years old.

Generally speaking, the expectation of full-time paid work was held by most of these adolescents. About 68% of the women in the study planned to be working full time in the paid labour force at age thirty, while 7% thought that they would be working part time for pay. The other 25% of the young women thought that they would be working at home, raising children, or were uncertain about their future work. In comparison, 26 of the 28 men in the study expected to work full time. Only one young man thought that he might be working part time and only one other speculated that he might be unemployed. Considering present high unemployment rates, the expectation for continuous employment is probably rather optimistic.

As for the kinds of work the adolescents expected, there was a heavy weighting in the direction of professional jobs. For the women, some of these were paid jobs which women have traditionally held, while others were not. A smaller proportion of young women planned to be housewives when they were thirty, and some expected to enter the traditionally female labour force in clerical or sales work. More women than men did not know what work they wanted to do, even though they knew they wanted to work for pay. Sixteen per cent of women and 11% of men either had no idea about their future job or were very vague in describing it.

In contrast with girls, the boys in the study tended to choose a much wider range of potential jobs than the girls did. For example, the 28 males listed 24 different jobs including the traditionally "masculine" professions, business and managerial, service, skilled and unskilled labour jobs. But the 122 females chose only forty-four different jobs, mainly traditional and non-traditional professions, clerical and service work, and housework. Males were more certain of their occupational choices than were females.

F. Professional Work

Of those who mentioned a specific job, 56% of the adolescents in our study expected to find professional or managerial positions by the age of thirty. This expectation was particularly strong among the males in the study (72% of males and 53% of females expected professional or managerial employment), as is shown in Table 3. This period of their lives was seen as one of maturity and stability, and they believed that their job or career would be well-established and that they would have flexible hours to suit their personal lives. The girls who wanted professional employment chose the following jobs: nurse, physiotherapist, teacher, social worker, doctor, lawyer, veterinarian, pharmacist, marine biologist, and astronomer. Here are some of their comments on their jobs:

> "I'm flirting with the idea of going into law. But I'll likely be a university professor in arts – literature, philosophy, history, I think . . . or law."
>
> Lara: 17 years old, Vancouver

> "I'd like to be accepted to McGill University in a science program . . . I'll probably be a (medical) specialist in some area, dealing with people rather than research."
>
> Louise: 15 years old, Winnipeg

> "I'm going to open up a nursery school when I finish university."
>
> Lynne: 17 years old, Toronto

> "I'm going to be a school guidance counsellor and I'll have a very cozy office, very relaxed with a record player . . . (translation)
>
> Monique: 19 years old, rural Quebec

Table 3: Expected Type of Work at Age Thirty, by Sex

	Sex		
	Female	Male	Total
Professional or Managerial	53.0% (61)	72.0% (18)	56.4% (79)
Clerical, Sales or Service	22.6% (26)	4.0% (1)	19.3% (27)
Manual labour	.9% (1)	24.0% (6)	5.0% (7)
Housewife	23.5% (27)	——	19.3% (27)
Total	100% (115)	100% (25)	100% (140)

About 10% of the girls expressed a preference to have a professional job working with young children. Of these, 6% wanted to be school teachers, 2% chose to work with handicapped children, and the other 2% preferred to work in day care centres.

Although 53% of the girls in this study, including those from all social backgrounds, preferred to have professional jobs in the future, girls with professionally employed mothers were most likely to have this aspiration. For example, 80% of the girls with professional mothers expected to have professional jobs at the age of thirty, compared to 54% of the daughters of clerical workers, 50% of the daughters of women with manual labour jobs, and 42% of the daughters of housewives.

In order to find out the kinds of women who might inspire the girls in their future ambitions or be their role models, we asked whom they most

admired. Girls who expected to have professional jobs tended to admire women who had accomplished something outside the home. Here are some examples:

> "I'd like to be like my aunt who works as an architect. She works with her husband and has two nice children."
>
> May: 15 years old, Toronto

> "Annick Marten (character in a soap opera entitled "Une Vie"). She's a doctor, single, and independent. That's the kind of life I want to lead." (translation)
>
> Lisette: 16 years old, rural Quebec

G. Housework

The housewife role is one of the rapidly changing roles in our society today. Before the Second World War, about 95% of Canadian families fit the traditional image of the woman who stayed at home with the children for her entire life while the husband was the breadwinner.[13] Now fewer than 40% of families fit this traditional model. Most married women will now be in the paid labour force for a major portion of their adult lives since about 63% of women who work for pay are married.[14]

Interestingly, the girls in our study reflected an awareness of these changing circumstances. This can be seen in the fact that of the 24% of the girls who saw themselves at home with their children at thirty, very few explicitly said that it was a permanent situation. Some girls speculated about whether they would work part time or not while their children were young. Only a few expressed a desire to be a permanent housewife. Girls whose mothers worked for pay were most likely to reject this idea with such comments as:

> "I don't want to sit around the house all day!" (implying that this is what housewives do)
>
> Shawna: 15 years old, Ottawa

"I'd want to work after marriage so that I have my own money to buy . . . well . . . to buy jeans and things!"

Kelly: 15 years old, rural Ontario

"I want to be able to support myself, in case something happens to my marriage . . . (I want to be) an independent individual."

Vicki: 17 years old, Toronto

Even those girls who realized the episodic nature of paid work and housework did not have a very clear idea of how this would actually happen. Those young women who expected to leave the labour force to have and rear children thought that they would experience no difficulties taking five to ten years off from their paid job. Several girls said that they wanted three children and would not return to work until the youngest was a teenager. When the interviewer calculated for one young woman that she planned to be out of the labour force for about fifteen years, she looked startled and then said that would be so. Of course, at this early stage of their lives, and with their inexperience with moving in and out of the labour force, it would be highly unlikely that they would have an adequate knowledge of possible problems finding work after fifteen years as a housewife – unless they are educated about these situations.

Girls who planned to be housewives at the age of thirty tended to admire other women who were housewives, including their mothers. They were also more likely than girls who wanted to work at professional jobs to admire film stars, popular singers, people who were famous, rich or attractive, or nobody at all. Here are some examples from girls who expected to be housewives at thirty, of the women they most admired:

"Mila Mulroney. She's such a great support to her husband! She's a great asset to him, maintaining the home and family."

Margaret: 17 years old, Toronto

"Christie Brinkley (cover girl). She's really pretty, famous, and rich."

Dawn: 16 years old, Halifax

H. Paid Work in the Pink Collar Ghetto

The other traditionally female forms of work anticipated by the young women were clerical, sales or service jobs. There were also a smattering of other jobs mentioned, such as hairdressing, waitressing, and child care work.

About 23% of the girls expected to do office work of some sort, retail sales, or service positions. They mentioned such positions as secretary, file clerk, bookkeeper, airline ticket agent, bank teller, sales clerk, and cashier. The main way the girls prepared for these positions was by studying typing or bookkeeping in school or working as a receptionist, typist, "girl Friday", sales clerk or cashier after school or during the summers.

In comparing the proportion of girls who wish to do clerical, sales or service work (23% of our sample) with the proportion of women who **actually** do this kind of work, we see that there is a serious misapprehension on the part of most of the interviewees. They did not know at this stage that about 63% of women in the paid work force are in "pink collar jobs" (including clerical, sales, and service positions).[15] They may be very surprised or distressed to find out how difficult it is to move into other types of work once entrenched in these sorts of jobs.

Generally speaking, girls who chose traditionally "female" jobs tended to come from poorer and larger families than those girls who chose professional work. They also tended to achieve lower grades in school than did those heading for professional employment. As well, their mothers were likely to be housewives or non-professionals in the paid work force.

I. Paid Work: Non-Traditional Job Choices

In the above discussion, the professional work which the girls expected included both traditional jobs (nurse, teacher, social worker) and non-traditional jobs which few women have done in the past (such as doctor, veterinarian, lawyer). If we take a closer look at young women's choice of non-traditional jobs we find that when girls think of non-traditional work they usually think of professional positions, such as medicine or law. They do not consider doing skilled labour jobs or trades, commission sales or high-level managerial jobs.

Of the girls interviewed, twenty-three (19%) suggested that they might be involved in jobs which women typically do not do.[16] Of these, twenty girls chose professional work. The most popular choice of non-traditional professional job was medical doctor. Although eight women expressed an interest in this job, two seemed doubtful that they could get into medicine because of poor grades in sciences. Three girls expressed an interest in being a veterinarian. For two of these girls, this was a realistic expectation, as they did well in school and had parents who could support them. However, for one girl it seemed a very unrealistic goal since she was an early school leaver, worked in an unskilled job, and expressed no desire to return to school.

Two young women expressed an interest in becoming a psychiatrist, although one was under the impression that she could qualify after only a few years of university. One girl wanted to be a marine biologist after seeing a female biologist on a television documentary. Another 15-year-old wanted to be an astronomer, or the first woman to lead a corps in the army. One woman chose business management, another chose architecture, another wanted to be a medical researcher, and another expressed interest in being a diplomat (but could not decide between that and journalism). Interestingly, of the twenty-eight women who chose non-traditional occupations, twenty-four had mothers who worked for pay. Most of the girls also came from well-off families, and thus could reasonably expect the kind of financial support that would be required for prolonged training.

It is interesting to look at the occupational aspirations of girls we interviewed who are in a private school where most students have professional

parents and relatively high incomes. All of the six girls we interviewed in this all-female school chose non-traditional professions. One expressed interest in being an archaeologist (but also a writer), one a veterinarian or a lawyer, one a medical researcher, one wanted to work in business management, and two wanted to be medical doctors. All of these girls came from well-educated or professional parents, and all of them had mothers who worked outside the home (one did volunteer work exclusively). Table 4 shows how girls' occupational choices differ with their mother's occupation.

Table 4: Occupational Choice at Age Thirty of Female Adolescents, by Mother's Present Occupation

	Daughter's Choice of Work at Thirty Years of Age				
	Professional or Managerial	Clerical, Sales or Service	Manual labour	Housewife	Total
Mother's Present Occupation					
Professional or Managerial	80.0% (16)	54.1% (20)	50.0% (9)	42.1% (16)	54.0% (61)
Clerical, Sales or Service	5.0% (1)	27.0% (10)	22.2% (4)	28.9% (11)	23.0% (26)
Manual labour	0%	0%	5.6% (1)	0%	0.9% (1)
Housewife	15.0% (3)	18.9% (7)	22.2% (4)	28.9% (11)	22.1% (25)
Total	17.7% (20)	32.7% (37)	15.9% (18)	33.6% (38)	100% (113)

Only three girls chose non-traditional jobs that could not be classified as professional. Fifteen-year-old Carla from Montreal expressed an interest in

being an airplane mechanic (although she also mentioned becoming a pilot, which she later discarded as too dangerous). Sixteen-year-old Karen from Ottawa was interested in going into the army. At the time of the interview, she was in cadets. And 17-year-old Maureen from Winnipeg said that she wanted to be a coach in a health spa. Each of these girls was the only daughter in the family. Although the second two cases were clearly making some preparation for their future jobs by participating in cadets and fitness activities, Carla apparently was not preparing in any way for this skilled labour job.

In looking at the overall group of twenty-three girls who chose non-traditional occupations, it is thought-provoking to note that they tended to be of the younger age group in the study (15 or 16 years old). Although we have not examined how aspirations change with age in individual adolescent girls, our findings suggest that younger girls may become more traditional as they get older. As the time for making a career choice approaches, she is discouraged from being "fanciful" or innovative, i.e., choosing jobs which women do not usually do. She therefore makes an occupational choice more in line with traditional expectations. This idea that girls become more conventional in the latter years of high school and throughout college or university is also supported by Canadian and American studies.[17]

J. Job Versus Career: Paid Work as a Way of Life

In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the two-earner family, with strong and often conflicting demands on women's time. Given the evident need for women to improve their own economic status and potential for economic self-sufficiency, it is important to look at how young women envision themselves handling potential conflicts between paid work and their family life. If they see their paid work simply as a "job" – something involving little psychological commitment or something they do only for money – then conflicting demands from their husband's work or from their children could be resolved by moving in and out of the labour force, if they could afford it. But if they saw their paid work as a **career**, involving psychological commitment and careful planning, they might be forced to resolve the conflicting demands between paid work and home life and

make some very difficult choices. How committed were the girls in our study to the idea of a paid career?

Although many girls used the term "career" to refer to their future paid work, it may be more accurate to refer to their portrayal of paid work as a "pseudo-career".[18] This suggests that their planned commitment may not be as strong as is necessary to advance in their career in the way that men have. For one thing, most of the girls planned to leave the labour force to rear their children as indeed they would have to do, for at least some period of time, in our society as it is now structured. Although many expected to be absent for two to five years, others wanted to leave the labour force or work part time until their children were adolescents. Here are some examples of those who planned to work for money, yet wanted to take off many years to rear their children:

> (By the age of twenty) "I'd hope to be a physiotherapist . . . I'd have an apartment with friends . . . I'd like to travel to different places like Hawaii . . ." (If you had a choice of just one thing happening in the next five years, what would it be?) "Have a successful job – the satisfaction of finally getting a good job after I've worked my way through school." (At age thirty) "I'll be home with the children. I'll get up at 7:00 and organize my day – like the laundry, etc. At 8:00 I'll get everyone up and make breakfast. At 9:30 I'll do errands after the kids go to school . . ." (What do you want most in the future?) "To have a good career until I have children. Then when they are older, I **might** go back to work. Also to have a happy marriage and happy kids – a good life!"
>
> Joy: 15 years old, Halifax

A careful look at this scenario shows that she must have had her first child no later than age twenty-three, if both children are in school by the time she is thirty. This means that she worked at her "career" for only three years. It takes at least that long to qualify as a physiotherapist. Here are two other examples of the shifting priority adolescents gave to work in their future lives:

> (When I'm twenty-one) "I want to be a hairdresser . . . So I'll have a hairdresser place for kids . . ." (At age thirty) "I'll get up in the morning and get breakfast for my kids . . . I send 'em to school . . . . I don't work because I have two kids." (What about hairdressing?) "I'm taking an absentee.

Let someone else run it! I guess I'll go in a few times a week, until the youngest is in Grade 2."

Cheryl: 16 years old, Vancouver

(At age twenty-two) "I'll be owning or managing a clothing store." (At age thirty) "At 6:00 I'll get up and get breakfast for my husband and two kids. One is a baby and one is school-age. I'll drive the one kid to school, feed the baby, and play with it. Then I'll put the baby to bed and watch the soaps . . ." (Later in the interview – what happened to your store?) Oh! I forgot about it. I guess someone is looking after it."

Risa: 17 years old, Toronto

Those girls who planned to have non-traditional professional careers (such as a doctor, lawyer or professor) were less likely to expect to take long periods of time out of the labour force. Here is an excerpt from a day at age thirty of one such girl, who goes to a private school:

"I'll have a husband and three kids – 5-1/2, 4, and 2-1/2 years old. I'll get up at 7:30 and make breakfast, and get the kids ready for school and day care. Then I'd get ready for work. I'd take the smallest to the sitter and then go to the office. I'm a doctor in a clinic . . . "

Juliet: 17 years old, Montreal

Although most of the twenty girls who planned high-level non-traditional careers did not want to interrupt their careers for child-rearing, there were several examples of girls who were ambivalent on this issue. One girl who planned to go to Oxford or Cambridge, but wasn't sure what she would study said:

(At age thirty) " . . . If I have kids, I'll be at home . . . at least part time . . . But I can't see not working, though I hear you can volunteer and be busy even when you have kids . . . I'll have a steady job . . . but I don't know what."

Lara: 17 years old, Vancouver

"I'd have a solid career, like a lawyer . . . But if I had children, I'd want to stay home . . . or work part time . . . or have a nanny. I'll have my children once my career is well underway . . . I want four children."

Suzanne: 15 years old, Ottawa

If Suzanne waited for her law career to be established and then took off time to have four children, she could not expect to return easily to her work without some penalty. Apparently, many young women are not adequately informed about the difficulties of balancing career and family, or the penalties involved in leaving the labour force for five to ten years.

Willingness to move for a job promotion was considered to be an indication of their level of commitment to their paid work. We asked what they would do if they were offered a job promotion in the other end of the country from where they lived. While 55% of the males said that they would definitely move, only 37% of the females gave this answer.

Nearly half of the adolescents of both sexes said that moving for a promotion would depend on the circumstances. If they had children or if their spouse did not want to go, this would influence their own decision. Their answers to this question showed a fair amount of realism. Here are some of the comments from the interviews of those who might take a promotion under certain circumstances:

"I would go only if my family could follow me." (translation)

Lucille: 19 years old, urban Quebec

"If I didn't have any children, I'd go. If my children were already in school, I would refuse. It would be too difficult for them to adapt to a new environment." (translation)

Rea: 17 years old, Montreal

Thirteen per cent of the girls (and none of the boys) said that they would refuse the promotion. The girls' reasons usually focused around the

difficulty of leaving their family and friends or the desire to maintain a stable environment for their children.

> "I wouldn't take it. My family is here. It was hard on me to move as a kid."
>
> Jody: 18 years old, Toronto

> "I wouldn't go because I don't want to go that far away from Mom and Dad and they don't want me to either."
>
> Kim: 15 years old, rural Nova Scotia

Girls from lower SES families tended to be more reluctant to move to another city or part of the country to take a new job. The Francophone girls were especially reluctant to move in order to find a better job for themselves and/or for their husband's job.

A third indication of the ambivalence over the paid career which many girls say they want is whether or not they would be willing to move with their husband if he were offered a promotion in another country. About one half of the girls agreed that they would go, as they felt that it would provide exciting opportunities to travel or would improve their standard of living. About 40% of the boys gave this answer as well.

> "I wouldn't mind it, if it was a good job." (What if you already had a good job?) "If I had a good job I'd probably go if it was good for us or him. I could always get another job." (She planned to be a doctor.)
>
> Glenda: 15 years old, Toronto

> "I'd go. A new start, adventure, and more money!" (She planned to have a clerical job.)
>
> Paula: 17 years old, Dartmouth

Twenty-two per cent of the girls said that they would move with their husband under certain circumstances. These included the size of the husband's

salary relative to theirs, which country he would be working in, how much he wanted to go, and whether or not they would be able to get another job there. Here are some of the girls' comments:

> "If he **really** wanted to take the job, I guess I'd have to go with him. I really wouldn't want to move to another country, but I'd want to be with him." (She planned to be a physiotherapist.)
>
> Joy: 15 years old, Halifax

> "It depends on my job. If I would get a job there I'd move. If he would lose his job if he didn't go, and my income was too low to support the family, then I'd move." (She planned to be a doctor.)
>
> Shawna: 15 years old, Ottawa

Thirty-six per cent of the boys said that they would move with their wife's job under certain circumstances and gave reasons similar to that of the girls.

Thirty per cent of the girls and twenty-five per cent of the boys said that they would **not** go with their spouses, regardless of the circumstances. Some felt that it would interfere with their career, or be detrimental to the lives of their children, or would be too far from their family and friends. Here is a typical comment:

> I wouldn't go even if he insisted or even if he left. I would stay here with my children." (She was uncertain of her future job.) (translation)
>
> Micheline: 16 years old, rural Quebec

The above examples of taking time from paid work for child-rearing, moving with their husband's job, or moving to obtain their own job promotion, indicate that some girls are either unaware of the demands of the labour market or are uninterested in having a paid career. But they simply may be realistic and know the difficulties they will face. From the interviews we got the impression of serious concern about conflicting priorities in their lives. They want "careers", yet they are ready to give priority to many other things such as child-rearing and their

husband's job. However, the fact that there was little difference between men and women on the question of moving with their spouse's job indicates that males may also experience a certain amount of ambivalence about where their first allegiance lies.

As for their anticipation of problems they may have to deal with in the paid labour force itself, the adolescents were asked what might prevent them from getting promoted in their future jobs. They gave two types of answers: internal factors, such as lack of motivation or not being good enough, and external factors, such as discrimination, lack of promotional opportunities, or conflicts with the boss. About 55% of the girls and 41% of the boys provided "internal" reasons for lack of progress on the job. On the other hand, 36% of the girls and 54% of the boys provided external reasons. The rest said they did not know. Table 5 shows the sex differences on this question.

In providing internal reasons for lack of progress on the job, about one third of the girls suggested that they might not be good enough to get a promotion, which could be seen as their having internalized discrimination against women. This was the most frequent reason given by the girls, but was also mentioned by 21% of the boys. Another 23% of the girls said that they might not want the extra responsibility or work involved in trying for a promotion. In other words, for over half of the girls, lack of employment progress would be, in their view, their own fault. Here are some typical comments from girls in the interviews about what might prevent them from getting promoted on the job:

> "... myself, if I couldn't accept the responsibility. I might worry too much."
>
> Marilyn: 19 years old, Ottawa

> "If I wasn't good at it." (She received a 90% average in school last year.)
>
> Julia: 15 years old, Montreal

> "Myself, I have no ambition." (translation)
>
> Simone: 19 years old, rural Quebec

(About getting a job) "My appearance." (She had a punk haircut.) "Also, I have a tendency to mouth off about what I think." (About promotion) "Lack of motivation."

Joan: 18 years old, Vancouver

Table 5: Hypothetical Reasons Given for Not Getting Promoted on the Job, by Sex

	Sex		
	Female	Male	Total
Not good enough	31.7% (33)	20.8% (5)	29.7% (38)
Not working hard enough or not wanting responsibility	23.1% (24)	20.8% (5)	22.7% (29)
Discrimination (based on sex and/or race)	17.3% (18)	4.2% (1)	14.8% (19)
No positions available	3.8% (4)	20.8% (5)	7.0% (9)
Personality conflict with boss	14.4% (15)	29.2% (7)	17.2% (22)
Other*	9.6% (10)	4.2% (1)	8.6% (11)
Total	81.3% (104)	18.8% (24)	100% (128)

*Includes difficulties of balancing family life and work life.

In looking at external reasons for lack of promotion on the job, 21% of the boys and only 4% of the girls mentioned that promotional opportunities might not exist because of high unemployment and competition for promotion. Another 30% of the boys and only 14% of the girls mentioned disagreements with the boss preventing them from progressing through the ranks. And 17% of the girls and 4%

of the boys mentioned discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, hair style, and clothing (or a combination of these). Here are some examples of comments from the interviews emphasizing external factors in lack of progress on the job:

> "If they don't need architects, or if they can't afford to raise my salary."
>
> John: 18 years old, Toronto

> "The boss's sexism." (translation)
>
> Daphne: 17 years old, Montreal

> "Being a woman . . . discrimination . . . If I was missing a lot of work because of having children." (She said she wanted six children.)
>
> Rhonda: 16 years old, Montreal

The younger women in the sample (15 and 16 years old) were more likely than the older ones to feel that they might not be good enough for a promotion. On the other hand, the older girls were slightly more likely to mention sex discrimination or problems related to balancing their family and work life. Girls from ethnic backgrounds other than English-Canadian were most likely to mention discrimination. Girls from non-white backgrounds were especially likely to emphasize racial and sexual discrimination in their answer. Table 6 shows how the two reasons for not getting promoted – not being good enough and discrimination – vary by ethnic background.

Table 6: Two Reasons Given By Females for not Getting Promoted in the Future, by Mother's Ethnicity*

	"If I wasn't good enough"	Sexual and/or racial discrimination
English Canadian	40.9% (18)	9.1% (4)
French Canadian	66.7% (8)	8.3% (1)
Native Indian	0	33.3% (2)
Other ethnic background	11.1% (4)	30.6% (11)
Total	30.6% (30)	18.4% (18)

*Out of a total of six reasons. Other reasons included not wanting the work/responsibility, no promotional positions available, personality confict with the boss, and "other".

K. Occupational Choice: Resources and Influences

Choosing a lifetime career, whether in paid or unpaid, professional or non-professional work, is an important task and one that ideally would be based on considerable knowledge and experience. This resource base can be difficult for young people to discern because information can be of such different sorts and come from varying sources.

If career planning is looked at as a pathway, it would be a series of loops with offshoots and some dead-ends. A goal or interest may arise, perhaps

after an accidental exposure to a television program or after meeting an appealing person. Alternatively, an interest may be long-standing – to be like mom and dad or always having wanted to grow up to be a doctor. Then, perhaps, the person discovers a bit about what it would take to achieve this goal and decides it really is appealing. Or perhaps they decide to drop it, or to find out more before deciding further. Some ideas would be pursued, some wouldn't; a summer job might lead to a "real" job, or it might not.

Increasingly, Canadians are working at more than one job or career in their lifetime. As skills become obsolete, as jobs become scarce in a particular field and plentiful in another, or as interests change, more and more people are finding that the work they started doing when they were younger is not the work they are doing later in life.

However, knowledge about what careers exist (including being a long-term housewife and the consequences of this choice), about what background or training is necessary, and about how to actually move into the career is important. Sources of knowledge can be very explicit, such as a pamphlet or a talk with a counsellor. But information can also appear in a more subtle form – in the attitudes of encouragement, neutrality or even opposition that significant friends or family may show to young people about their expressed career goals.

For specific information about education or training for potential careers, the adolescents in our study generally went to their guidance counsellors, their parents, or someone they knew who was doing the particular job in which they were interested. In addition to giving them occupational preference tests and discussing college and university requirements, guidance counsellors generally encouraged adolescents to stay in school, to aim for college or university, to take job-related courses, and particularly encouraged girls to retain both official languages and mathematics and science courses. They also suggested that students obtain some knowledge about computers. In most cases, their parents were telling their adolescents similar things. With a few exceptions, parents are generally encouraging children of both sexes to go to college or university, try for professional jobs, and aim to be financially self-supporting.

Mothers who had professional jobs themselves were most likely to encourage their daughters to aim for high-level professional jobs, such as doctor or lawyer. However, these families were generally wealthier and better educated. Housewives and mothers in manual labour jobs seemed to feel that lower level professional jobs (such as teacher or nurse) were more appropriate for their daughters. Here are some examples of what girls said their mothers had told them about their education and future jobs:

> "My mother, brother, and sister-in-law all want me to be a doctor. They're all in the medical field themselves."
>
> Charmane: 17 years old, Montreal

> "My mom said 'if you fail next year you'll have to quit and help me around the house' . . . but I haven't failed yet!"
>
> Rose: 15 years old, rural British Columbia

L. Mother as a Role Model

However, it is not just what their mother **says** that is important in shaping girls' occupational choices. The daughters of housewives and non-professional working women listened to their mothers **less** than the daughters of professional women when they gave them advice about future work. Of course, the greater family income that may accompany a mother working in a professional position is also likely to be a factor in the girl's planning. The daughter's training may be easily supported and she may therefore take her mother's advice to try for a professional job.

But in addition to this, many girls appeared to use their mothers as role models. The daughters of housewives were more likely than others to want to be housewives themselves, or to feel that they must stay home with their young children before returning to the paid work force. Daughters of professional working mothers were more likely than other girls to expect to take on professional work and to have their children cared for by a sitter.

Girls from French-Canadian homes were the most likely to mention their mothers as people they most admired (about 25%), whereas girls from English-Canadian families were the least likely to mention them (less than 2%). Less than 10% of Native girls and 5% of girls from other ethnic backgrounds mentioned their mothers as people they would like to emulate. Here are some comments from girls who named their mothers when we asked who they most admired:

> "My mother. She manages to get herself out of any bad situation. When my father wanted to have us (obtain custody of us), she worked it all out very well by getting help from social services and lawyers. We have trouble paying the rent almost every month, but she always finds a way somehow." (translation)
>
> Colette: 17 years old, Montreal

> "My mother. She has a family, children, and a job."
>
> Nella: 17 years old, Toronto

However, other kinds of role models influence girls as well, including teachers, neighbours, other relatives, and friends of the family. While 24% of boys mentioned fathers, other relatives, or friends of the family as people they most admired, only 8% of the girls included these people.

M. The Influence of the Media

When asked whom they most admired (sex not specified by interviewer), most girls listed women, and most boys listed men. Girls were more likely than boys to list television characters (especially those in situation comedies and soap operas), movie stars or royalty (41% of the girls and 28% of the boys). Boys were more likely to list professional men (such as scientists, politicians, and doctors) and people they knew personally, including their fathers, other relatives, and neighbours (48% of the boys compared to 38% of the girls). This sex difference could be related to the fact that there are fewer women than men who have accomplished things that are known to the general public.

In terms of media use, we noticed a relationship between watching a lot of television and being less oriented towards a paid career. Adolescents from lower SES families and students with lower grades in school tended to watch more television than did higher SES adolescents and those who achieved higher grades in school. Girls who watched more television were less likely to be planning for paid work. It is possible that watching a lot of television, especially soap operas, situation comedies, and rock videos, focuses girls' attention on appearance and glamour rather than education and professional achievement. However, it is also possible that those who have less interest in occupational achievement and education or fewer chances of succeeding in these areas will tend to watch more television. Whether or not television and other forms of mass media (such as fashion magazines which many adolescent girls read) discourage young women from focusing on their occupational futures, or at least cause them to feel ambivalent about the importance of job planning and success, certainly needs more research. However, we did find at least four girls who admired women doctors, business women, and a scientist they saw on television, and were influenced to pursue these careers themselves as a result.

N. The Influence of Their Friends

What their friends are doing also has an impact on the aspirations of adolescents. Young people tend to socialize with those from a similar economic background to themselves, because these are the people who live in their neighbourhoods and go to their schools. For this reason, peer group influence would be different for those from wealthier families than it would be for those from poorer families. For example, the wealthier girl in a private school environment socializes with other wealthy girls, most of whom plan to go to university and qualify for a high-level professional job.[19] They would reinforce each other's aspirations. However, the poorer girl may socialize with those who have already quit school or those who may be forced to shorten their education for financial or other reasons. If she insists on planning to go to university, she may be considered odd or over-ambitious. Her friends may positively reinforce the choice of traditional roles.

Although other studies on the aspirations of adolescent girls have commented on the importance of male friends in limiting the aspirations of girls,[20] we got the impression that girls choose their boyfriends in line with their own ambitions. Those girls who had "high" educational or occupational ambitions said they were reluctant to become involved in serious relationships until they finished their education. Leone, who planned to be a nurse, said:

> "My friends tell me to look at guys . . . but I don't have a boyfriend now. I don't bother with them. They tie you down! Education is most important, not relationships!"
>
> Leone: 19 years old, Toronto

While several of the girls with steady boyfriends mentioned that their boyfriends supported their career plans, Juliet from a private school in Montreal planned to attend university in the United States (at an elite institution) to study law or medicine. She said that her boyfriend, who left school after one year in CEGEP:

> ". . . doesn't like the idea of me going to school in the States. He thinks that I have a lot of dreams . . . that I am over-ambitious."
>
> Juliet: 17 years old, Montreal

She mentioned that her parents wanted her to become a doctor and, although they liked her boyfriend, they disapproved of her going out so much.

A 17-year-old girl from Toronto, who planned to be an office worker, said that both her boyfriend and his mother were trying to get her to raise her aspirations:

> "They think I'm capable of a higher position – something higher than a secretary, like an accountant – but I don't know."
>
> Margaret: 17 years old, Toronto

O. Socioeconomic Background and Occupational Choice

And, finally, we keep returning to the importance of the socio-economic background of the adolescent's family in shaping occupational choices. Both sexes tended to choose jobs which were performed by friends of the family or their parents. For example, those whose fathers were doctors often wanted to be doctors. Those whose fathers were manual labourers chose skilled labour or office jobs, depending on the gender of the adolescent. Although there were some notable exceptions, most adolescents realized that without their parents' financial support they could not continue their studies. They modified their aspirations according to their family's economic circumstances.

P. Conclusion: Adolescent Girls and Work

Although about three quarters of the adolescent girls in the study planned to work for pay when they were thirty years old, they tended to think that they could move in and out of the labour market with greater ease than is typically possible. While they said that they wanted careers, their work was often put aside when family responsibilities intervened. They generally felt that the responsibility for housework and child-rearing was theirs, and that paid work must fit in with what they saw as more important aspects of their adult lives. With little personal experience in the job market, they were unaware of the ways in which women are penalized when they leave the labour force for ten years. They were unaware that they will be jeopardizing their chances for promotion, for receiving wages and salaries equivalent to those of men, or even for finding work.

Many of the girls in our study saw part-time work as a temporary solution to finding alternative child care when their family was young. However, a few saw this as a permanent work situation. While working part time may seem to be ideal for the young mother, it may not be so ideal when her children are grown or if her husband leaves her. Moving back into full-time work may not be quite as easy as many of our girls thought.

Considering the high rate of recent marriages ending in divorce, many adolescent women should expect to be self-supporting in the future. After divorce, women usually are granted custody of the children and husbands do not often pay child support after the first few years. Although no one likes to think that her marriage could end prematurely, the reality of divorce has to be accepted and adolescents should be able to prepare themselves for that eventuality. Remaining in the labour force as long as possible during adult life, and upgrading qualifications at regular intervals, may improve the financial situation of women whose marriages end.

While a few girls in this study seemed to be aware of what life realistically could be like in 10 or 15 years, most saw their future in the following sequence: high school, college or university, paid work, marriage, children, and return to the work force. They expected to find professional or clerical positions immediately after their schooling was complete, and work for pay until their children were born. After their children were in school, they expected to re-enter the labour force and to experience no difficulty finding paid work; few child care problems were anticipated.

The boys in our study were somewhat more realistic in that they knew they had to work to support their families and seemed to see their work as life-long, requiring long-range plans. However, their expectations for full employment and professional work were more optimistic than present employment statistics indicate. Although the boys in our study were not much more realistic than the girls, they may be penalized less than girls for their lack of realism. Women still have to contend with employment discrimination, shifting priorities of paid work and work at home, and a society which sees the husband as the main breadwinner.

As we might expect from adolescents, the future was painted in rosy tones. In most of their discussions of the future, there was no unemployment for them or their spouses, no divorce, no economic need for the females to work while their children were young. Perhaps they will find that juggling career and family life is not as easy as they expect, considering the "double burden" on today's working woman. The question for a parent, educator, and person concerned about the potential well-being of all members of society is how can girls be made aware

of these possibilities? How can they be encouraged to plan their lives for these inevitable problems and yet not be discouraged or defeated by the enormous task of being able to stand on their own? These questions are difficult to answer but they are certainly worth discussing. In the next chapter we will examine the personal lives of adolescent women and how they expect their lives to change in the future.

CHAPTER 4
PERSONAL LIVES, RELATIONSHIPS, AND PRIORITIES

> (What do you want most in the future?) "A big house. A nice house and lotsa nice clothes. Money to spend . . . not rich, but money to spend."
>
> Cheryl: 16 years old, Vancouver

A. Introduction

A number of studies have noted that the time adult women devote to their family responsibilities and their relationships often detracts from their advancement in the labour force and from their leisure time. Women working in the labour force are especially deprived of the leisure time which men usually enjoy, because women are expected to care for children and the home even in what is supposed to be their time off work.[1] In this study, we wanted to see how adolescents organize their personal lives and how they envisage their lives in the future. This may provide us with some indication of the degree to which their current patterns are already sex-stereotyped and whether the pattern of adult women orienting their lives to their families will continue.

In discussing their goals for their personal lives in the future, we have focused on the girls, although we will discuss the boys where relevant. Most girls seemed to want a combination of enjoyable work and a satisfying family life in the future. We have, for purposes of comparison, divided the girls into three groups: comparing those who oriented their future scenarios mainly towards their family life, with those who focused on their work, with those who emphasized other aspects of their lives. However, before providing excerpts from the interviews for each of these groups, we will discuss how adolescents see their future lives in terms of marriage, children, the division of labour in the home, leisure activities, residence, and what they want most in the future. Finally, their educational and occupational plans will be compared to their personal goals.

A variety of details on adolescents' leisure activities now and their expectations for their personal lives at the age of thirty were available to us from descriptions in the interviews and future diaries as well as from follow-up questions. Having already dealt with those aspects of their typical days related to education and work, we will now focus on their leisure activities, their relationships, the organization of their future households, and their personal goals for the future. We will compare their present situation and their projections into the future. Because leisure activities are affected by how much free time one has, we have divided the activities of adolescents into four sections: one for students, one for adolescents who are working full time, one for unemployed adolescents, and one for unmarried mothers at home. We will see the variations in their patterns of leisure currently, and the relationship, if any, between their present activities and their future plans will be analysed for any inconsistencies.

B. Adolescents and Leisure

In the interviews, we asked the adolescents to describe what they did in their leisure time and recorded the activities which they mentioned. We then compared adolescents from different circumstances and from different social backgrounds to see how their activities differed. Obviously, the leisure activities of adolescents are affected by whether or not they are in school, at work, unemployed, or at home with a child. Before we give examples of the typical days of young people in each group, let us look at what the adolescents, in general, did in their spare time.

When we calculated the percentage of girls and boys who mentioned each type of leisure activity, we found some similarities, although certain aspects of leisure activities of males and females differed. For example, 81% of the females and 68% of the males mentioned that they watched television. Boys were more involved in sports than girls (86% compared to 70%) and more likely to say that they spent time with their friends (86% compared to 78%). Girls were more likely than boys to say that they read books and magazines (67% compared to 46%) and that they talked on the telephone (42% compared to 21%). A few girls also mentioned that they liked to write poetry or letters, to shop (which often involved

browsing or window-shopping), to sew or knit, and to play a musical instrument. Table 1 provides the percentages and the numbers of the leisure activities of the males and the females. The activities add up to more than 100% because each adolescent listed several items.

The fact that more girls (especially rural girls) than boys watched television may be an important factor in why girls were more likely than boys to list media figures as people they most admired. Although we did not keep a consistent account of their viewing hours, it seemed to be between two and four hours a day for most adolescents. In the Toronto area, many girls mentioned watching soap operas, especially "The Young and the Restless", but also situation comedies and movies, rather than news, sports, or current events programs. Boys generally were uninterested in soap operas, as were girls from wealthier and more educated families.

Girls were also more likely than boys to read, and they sometimes mentioned the type of reading material they preferred. The most frequently mentioned reading material for girls was romantic novels (such as Harlequin romances) and teen magazines. Girls with higher educational aspirations were more likely to read daily newspapers and non-fiction than were girls with lower aspirations. The lower SES adolescents were more likely than the higher ones to read comic books and magazines rather than books.

The girls we interviewed seemed to spend a lot of time talking on the telephone, while boys went out a little more with their friends. Girls often used the telephone as a way of socializing, while the boys met their friends away from home.

Recently, there has been a great deal of negative publicity about video games because of their violent orientation and we found that very few girls played them. Only 7% of the girls but 43% of the boys mentioned playing video games. Some of the boys and a few of the girls had computers in their homes or at their friends'. In other cases, they went to the local shopping plaza on their lunch hour, after school or on the weekends to play the commercial video games.

Table 1: Adolescents' Leisure Activities,* by Sex

	Female	Male
Socializing	77.9% (95)	85.7% (24)
Sports	70.2% (85)	85.7% (24)
Watching television	80.8% (97)	67.9% (19)
Reading	66.9% (81)	46.4% (13)
Listening to music	47.1% (57)	50.0% (14)
Talking on the telephone	42.1% (51)	21.4% (6)
Going to movies	33.6% (41)	32.1% (9)
Playing a musical instrument	27.0% (33)	7.1% (2)
Shopping	18.9% (23)	3.6% (1)
Sewing or knitting	11.7% (14)	0
Writing (letters, diaries, poetry)	9.1% (11)	0
Video games	7.4% (9)	42.9% (12)
Drawing or painting	7.4% (9)	7.1% (2)
Looking after animals (farm animals and pets)	5.8% (7)	7.1% (2)
Total number of adolescents	122	28

*Each adolescent listed several activities

Here are some of the comments from the interviews about how the adolescents spend their leisure time:

> "I play water polo. I have a computer in my bedroom . . . I fool around with it. I'm in a leadership program at the YWCA. I watch television . . . about two hours a week. I go cross-country running. And I read . . . mainly computer magazines."
>
> Doug: 16 years old, Ottawa

> "On weekends I go to my sisters' in Laval and Longueuil. I listen to records and write down the lyrics. Sometimes I type them and give my friends copies. I watch television about two hours every night. I read "photo-romans" (romantic novellas told with captioned photographs), "Lundi" magazine, novels, and fan magazines." (translation)
>
> Marie-Claire: 15 years old, Montreal

> "I do Irish dancing – I compete as well as teach. I ride my bike. I work at the shop (clothing store). I have a boyfriend . . . We go out for dinners. I play volleyball and basketball, watch T.V. . . . we hang around and swim. I lift weights on Wednesday nights with a girlfriend. I read . . . juicy romantic stuff."
>
> Nancy: 16 years old, Winnipeg

In order to get a better idea of how leisure activities are affected by whether the adolescent is a student, a full-time worker, unemployed, or an unmarried mother, let us look at their typical days, which include leisure activities, of each group separately.

C. A Typical Day of a Student

Since students represented the bulk of the adolescents interviewed (83% of the sample), what students do with their time is most typical of the group of adolescents we interviewed. The social and leisure activities of students from all social backgrounds were centred around their school and classmates. After classes,

many of them were involved in clubs or team sports and two thirds participated in at least one extracurricular activity. The area around their lockers and the school cafeteria were meeting places where they often socialized, somewhat away from adult restrictions and expectations.

Because leisure activities vary with the education and income of the family, the leisure activities of our students also differed with their family background. Here are two different "typical days" for adolescents. In the first case, Vicki, who was seventeen years old, was in Grade 12 in a public high school. She came from an Italian family, and her parents were both manual labourers.

> "I get up at 6:30 and get prepared for school. I arrive at school at 8:30, and before classes I talk in the cafeteria or do my homework. Then I'm in classes until lunchtime. A group of us . . . girls . . . have lunch together. We discuss the daily events, and boys. Classes are over at 3:10. I come home on the bus and watch T.V. . . . "The Young and the Restless" (soap opera). At 4:30 my mother comes home and she makes supper. My dad comes home around 6:00 and we have dinner. After dinner, I watch T.V. and study, and go to bed around 11:00."

Vicki described her leisure activities in more detail:

> "I talk to friends. I read . . . mainly novels. I go to cafés to meet people, and to dances. I come here (to the YWCA where I was interviewing her) to the Teen Leadership Group. I watch T.V. about four hours a day, and listen to music on the radio."
>
> Vicki: 17 years old, Toronto

Here is another account of a typical day of a high school student. This girl, Frances, comes from a higher SES family with a university professor father and a social worker mother.

> "I get up around 8:00 – usually late – so there's no time for breakfast. I either walk by myself or get a ride from my mom to school. I arrive about 9:03, and go right to class . . . If I have a spare, I find someone I know and go to the library or cafeteria, or do my homework in the hall.

At lunchtime, I hang around my locker. Every other day, I lift weights. I'll have a sandwich there or bring fruit from home. When I don't lift weights, I find my friends and do homework. If I have a day off, I do some artwork. I'm doing a student-initiated project, so I work on that.

When I get home from school, I clean up the dog, watch T.V., draw or read. We eat around 6:00. I do the dishes three times a week (trade off for cooking). Usually then I'll relax and read the paper. I'll do some homework, or around 7:00, I'll go out with my friends. If I'm going to call people, I call around 8:00 or 9:00. Around 10:00 I go jogging with the dog and am back in time for "The Journal". I also like to watch "Barney Miller". I'll watch a bit of the late movie. Sometimes my dad will come up and I like that time because we talk about a lot of things. I may have a shower, get ready for bed, and put out the lights around 1:30 or 2:00."

In describing her leisure time activities more fully, Frances said:

"I go out . . . to cafés, socials, movies. I don't have a steady boyfriend . . . I try not to watch too much T.V. . . . "The Journal", "W5", "The Fifth Estate", and "Hand and Eye" are my favourites. I listen to music. I have a general group of friends and we sometimes get together and go out. I also go out with my parents; I consider them my friends. I walk my dog. I jog and try to get into shape . . . "

Frances: 17 years old, Winnipeg

Generally speaking, students from higher SES families were involved in more organized teams and clubs. They usually watched less television, and were more likely to watch news programs and documentaries than were students from lower SES families. Students from lower SES families were more likely to spend time socializing, watching movies, soap operas, or situation comedies on television, and to read magazines rather than books and daily newspapers.

D. A Typical Day of An Adolescent Employed Full Time

Only nine adolescents in the study had full-time jobs, and the descriptions of their days differed somewhat from those of the students. The adolescents who worked full time had graduated from high school, but even with

their diploma they were able to find only relatively low-level jobs with little future security. Most worked full time sporadically and were occasionally unemployed. About half of them planned to continue their education at a later date.

Here is the typical weekday of a Halifax girl, Jan, who worked as a sales clerk. Although she worked full time, she continued to live with her parents and her brothers and sister.

> "I get up at 7:30, shower, and dress. I eat breakfast, which I make myself. I walk to work and start at 9:00 as a sales clerk. At 11:30, I have a break. I eat fruit, smoke, and talk to whoever else is on a break. Then I work from 11:45 until 2:00. From 2:00 to 3:00, I have my lunch break. I pick up a salad at the Dominion Store and eat in the staffroom. I also read the paper. From 3:00 to 4:00 I work, take a coffee break at 4:15, and then work 'til 5:30. I get home about 5:45 – I usually walk or get a lift. At 6:00 eat dinner . . . it's made by the family . . . shared. Then I wash dishes with my brother or sister. At 6:45 I usually talk on the phone to a friend. Then I read or listen to the stereo. Around 7:30 I talk on the phone or go for a coffee with a friend. At 10:00 I get ready for bed and go to sleep around 11:30."

In describing her leisure activities, Jan said:

> "I talk on the phone to friends . . . oh, maybe 11 hours a week. I go out to clubs with friends. I read – western books, non-fiction, and magazines. In the winter, I ski. In the summer I go jogging. I walk and skip. I swim at the beach in summer – I spend the day there . . . "
>
> Jan: 19 years old, Halifax

The daily activities of employed adolescents focused around their jobs, and they generally had less time to socialize during the day than students did. No organized activities were available to them during the working day. During their breaks and lunch hours, they usually had time for a snack or drink, some conversation, and maybe a walk. In the evenings, working adolescents were less likely to be involved in clubs or team sports than students were, and were more likely to socialize informally with friends.

E. A Typical Day of a Teen Mother

The daily activities of the six teen mothers we interviewed were quite different from those of the students and other adolescents who were not mothers. Their typical days provided a good illustration of the consequences of leaving school without job skills and of teenage pregnancy. Only one of the teen mothers in the study was employed. She worked part time as a cashier in a retail store. The other five mothers stayed at home with their child. None of these mothers were legally married and whether or not they had a boyfriend did not seem to be important in their daily activities. Here is the typical day of an adolescent mother who stayed at home. Monica was 17 years old, and lived with her boyfriend in a highrise apartment in the Toronto suburbs.

> "I get up at 8:00 or 9:00 and make breakfast for my boyfriend and myself. He leaves for work at 10:30 (he works in a factory). I watch T.V.: "Wheel of Fortune", "Game Go", and the soaps. I also look after the baby. From 12:00 to 1:00 I have lunch and do some housework. In the afternoon, I watch T.V. and look after the baby. At 9:00 my boyfriend comes home. I make supper, we eat, and then I clean up. I watch some more T.V., or go out for a walk. I go to bed around 11:00. The baby wakes up all night and cries, so I'm always tired."

Monica described her leisure time in the following ways:

> "I go shopping (which she saw as "leisure"). I listen to the stereo. I watch T.V. . . . about 10 hours a day. I go to the teen mothers' group (at the local YWCA). I don't go out with my boyfriend because he gets home from work at 9:00 p.m."
>
> Monica: 17 years old, Toronto

The unmarried mothers in the study, who usually had about Grade 10 education and generally came from lower SES families, spent much of their time watching television or reading romantic novels when they were not caring for their child. Their child-rearing took so much of their time and energy that most had little desire or opportunity to look for work outside the home or to improve their educational qualifications. Of the six mothers we interviewed, five appeared to be

depressed. However, they seemed uncertain how to improve their lives. They saw their lives improving when their child grew older and they could get out more often.

F. The Unemployed Adolescent

Since most of the unemployed adolescent women in our study were teen mothers, and we discussed them separately in the preceding section, we will give an example of an unemployed male. Pierre, 18 years old, lived in Montreal. He had left school a year and a half before the interview, after completing the first term of CEGEP. Since that time, he worked as a cabinet-maker for about ten months and then was laid off. He had been unemployed for about two months when we interviewed him.

> "I get up at 11 a.m. or noon because I watch movies till late at night. I have breakfast and have a shower. I look at the mail. I look for something to do in the apartment. It's an old flat and we just moved in. There's a lot to do. I'm rewiring the electrical system. I strip the woodwork, fix things. I work at that about six hours a day. I make supper with my brother. We really share the routine. My father does the dishes. Then I finish the repair jobs I started that day. I stop around 10 p.m. and watch movies till about 4 a.m." (translation)

In describing his leisure activities in more detail, he said:

> ". . . downhill skiing, watching movies on our VCR, reading science magazines. Discos on Fridays and weekends . . . video games – we have a microcomputer." (translation)
>
> Pierre: 18 years old, Montreal

This unemployed adolescent seemed to do quite a bit of work around the house compared with the amount other boys, and most men, apparently do, according to the studies.[2] Most of the adolescents who were marginally employed or unemployed seemed bored and restless and were especially negative and pessimistic about their chances of finding work and being able to move away from home. However, the desire to work was strong in most of the adolescents we

interviewed. Without work and the income that goes with it, even their leisure activities were restricted.

In comparing the four groups of adolescents, the students appeared to participate more in sports, clubs, and other organized activities. They seemed to be more community-oriented in their leisure time and were more optimistic about their future. Much of the difference between the students and the other adolescents can be attributed to the fact that, generally speaking, the students were more likely than the others to come from better educated and wealthier homes. With a more comfortable lifestyle and less pressure to earn a living, the students usually had more time and opportunity to develop their hobbies and their interests.

G. Personal Goals for the Future

Through personal diaries of a typical weekday at the age of thirty, we were able to gather information on how adolescent girls hope to organize their personal lives as adult women. Whether they plan to marry or not, whether they want to have children, how they plan to organize their domestic chores are all important indications of their level of awareness of the problems which adult women are presently facing in combining paid work and family life.

In their accounts of a typical day at thirty, we wanted them to make their accounts of this day as concrete as possible. We probed for details on their marital status, plans for child-bearing and child-rearing, division of labour at home, work, place of residence, and leisure activities. Since we have already dealt with their employment plans and leisure activities, we will now focus on their personal relationships and work in the home. Each aspect of their personal lives mentioned above will be dealt with separately. Choices over marriage and career seemed to occupy much of their thoughts on their futures as they saw them. Therefore, we have used this as a framework and provided examples of the personal diaries of those who focused their lives on their family, on their work, and on neither work nor family. However, we should also mention that a few girls were ambivalent about whether their family or career was more important, and they presented two

different scenarios depending on whether or not they were married. We will begin our look at how adolescents saw various aspects of their personal lives with their perceptions on marital status.

H. Marital Status: Future Expectations

Marriage and family living was the most frequently chosen adult life-style for the adolescents in our study. Nearly three quarters planned to be married at the age of thirty, with girls slightly more likely than boys to choose this marital status (75% compared to 64%). Eleven per cent of the boys and 6% of the girls suggested that they might be cohabiting, but probably wouldn't legally marry. More boys than girls expected to be single (25% compared to 15%) and only a few girls, but no boys, speculated that they might be divorced or at least living alone with their children (see Table 2). Let us first look at those who expected to be married in the future, and compare them with those who expected to be single.

1. Those Who Expected to be Married

Seventy-five per cent of the adolescent girls expected to be married at the age of thirty. The age of marriage varied by socioeconomic background, with the higher SES girls stating a preference for later marriage (around thirty) and the lower SES girls preferring marriage in their early twenties.

Reasons for marriage were rarely given, although a few girls in our study mentioned the desire to share their lives with someone and to have a strong family life, with children. Most adolescents of both sexes seemed to assume that living with a marriage partner was the expected and "natural" way to live, although a few questioned this expectation.

The way most girls portrayed marriage was in very romantic terms. Many girls mentioned that they wanted to marry a professional man, especially a doctor or lawyer, although a few said that it did not matter what his occupation

was as long as they loved each other. Several girls mentioned that their husband would be loving and kind and would like children. Here are two such comments:

> "My husband would be sensitive, kind, and loving . . . "
>
> Elaine: 17 years old, Montreal

> "I wouldn't marry a man unless he was good to me, really caring, not selfish, the perfect guy . . . a good father, good with kids, responsible, loving, caring . . . "
>
> Linda P.: 17 years old, Vancouver

Table 2: Expectations of Marital Status at Age Thirty, by Sex

	Female	Male
Married	74.8% (89)	64.3% (18)
Cohabiting	5.9% (7)	10.7% (3)
Single or living alone	15.1% (18)	25.0% (7)
Don't know	4.2% (5)	0
Total	100% (119)	100% (28)

Most girls expected that their husbands would spend time with them and their children in the evenings. While a few suggested that they would probably go out to restaurants, movies, the theatre or visiting in the evening, most of the girls assumed that they would stay at home with their husbands, playing with the children, watching television or talking. Several girls presented a scenario in which

they were sitting in front of the fire, talking with their husband after the children went to bed. Here is an example from Andrea:

> "Maybe we will go out, or spend a quiet evening at home . . . We'll sit by the fireplace, watching T.V. or listening to a record, or talking . . . "
>
> Andrea: 16 years old, Toronto

This version of marriage was especially apparent among those adolescents who had not experienced parental separation or divorce. Eighty-one per cent of girls from two-parent families expected to be married compared to 66% of girls from one-parent families. The same trend was apparent for boys. While most adolescents assumed that their marriages would be intact at the age of thirty, some of those from one-parent families were not so sure that they would be married at all or still be married at the age of thirty.

Rural girls were more likely than urban girls to expect to be married at thirty (90% compared to 70%). No rural girl even mentioned cohabitation, while about 8% of the urban girls did (see Table 3). Marriage expectations were particularly high among those we interviewed in Nova Scotia, where 15 out of 17 girls planned to marry. Adolescent women in the urban centres of central Canada were least enthusiastic about matrimony.

Most of those who planned to marry also wanted to have children. The link between marriage and procreation was strong, with only a few girls who planned to pursue professional careers involving travel or long hours suggesting that they might not have children after marriage.

Table 3: Rural/Urban Differences in Girls' Expectations of Marital Status at Age Thirty

	Rural	Urban
Marriage	90.0% (27)	70.3% (64)
Cohabitation	0	7.7% (7)
Single*	6.7% (2)	17.6% (16)
Don't know	3.3% (1)	4.4% (4)
Total	100% (30)	100% (91)

* Includes some who had cohabited or married and at age thirty expected to have no partner.

2. Single at Thirty

About 15% of the girls and 25% of the boys suggested that they might not be married at the age of thirty. For these adolescents, the single life was associated with freedom to travel, to pursue a challenging paid career, or to remain childless. In a few cases, the desire to remain single was linked with the exploitation which some women associate with marriage. Usually, though, the adolescents could provide no explicit reasons for wanting to remain single.

Although some adolescents expected to be single at age thirty, we should mention that some of these expected to marry later in life. For example, many of the men expected to marry between the ages of thirty and forty, as did some of the women anticipating professional careers. Only a few adolescents completely rejected the idea of marriage, and these tended to come from families where they experienced physical or psychological abuse, family conflict, or a difficult divorce involving other problems (such as an alcoholic parent). Some suggested that their parents had felt suffocated by marriage.

Girls from one-parent families were more likely than those from two-parent families to anticipate being single at the age of thirty (23% compared to 10%). Eighteen per cent of girls living in urban areas expected to be single compared to 7% of rural girls.

Here are some quotes from the interviews about remaining single: Christine and Gail both come from one-parent families, Ann was an abused child now living in a foster home, and Deb came from Trinidad (where her father still lives) and now lives with her mother and her siblings.

> "I would never get married. I don't believe in it. I guess I'm not confident the relationship would last."
>
> Christine: 17 years old, Ottawa

> (In description of a typical day at age thirty) "... and I don't work because I have two kids." (Is the kids' father around?) "No, he probably took off the minute they were born! ... No, no men (in my life). They're a waste of time!"
>
> Gail: 17 years old, Vancouver

> "I don't want to get married and have kids. If it happens, I think I'll die!"
>
> Ann: 17 years old, Halifax

> (In description of a day at age thirty) "I have four kids." (Do you have a husband?) "No, I don't see one" (meaning in image of herself at age thirty). (What happened to him?) "I don't know, but I don't see him."
>
> Deb: 19 years old, Toronto

3. Cohabitation Without Marriage

Although some adolescents wanted a relationship at the age of thirty, they did not want to become legally married. About 6% (7) of the girls and 11% (3) of the boys preferred cohabitation over legal marriage, although some wavered

between the idea of cohabitation and legal marriage. In most cases, legal marriage was associated with boredom and conventionality.

Since an increasing number of Canadians are living together without being legally married,[3] we asked all the adolescents what they would do if their boyfriend or girlfriend wanted to live together without getting married. Only 28% of the adolescents – 31% (36) of the females and 19% (6) of the males – said that they would **not** agree to live with them because they associated cohabitation with exploitation or lack of commitment. Here are some comments from those against cohabitation:

> "No! I'd probably try to work it out. Or I'd ditch him!"
>
> Joanne: 15 years old, rural Ontario

> "No, I wouldn't do it! I don't think it's right to fool around and not get married. In my family, you're supposed to be married before you jump into the sack. Otherwise, the guy's just using you. Why else would he not want to marry you?"
>
> Cheryl: 16 years old, Vancouver

Almost half of the boys and 27% of the girls in the study gave a qualified yes, that they would live together if it were a "trial marriage" or if they thought that their partner might consider marriage in the future. Glenda, whose parents are divorced and whose mother lives with her boyfriend, said:

> "It would depend on how serious I felt about him. I'd only live with him if there was a chance of marriage or he might want to marry later."
>
> Glenda: 15 years old, Toronto

Forty-one per cent of the girls and 32% of the boys said that they would live together, with no qualification. Among the girls, those most in favour of cohabitation tended to be from one-parent homes. Sixty per cent (28) of the girls from one-parent families said that they would definitely live with their boyfriend if he wanted to. Only 30% (21) of the girls from two-parent families said this.

There did not seem to be any clear difference between higher and lower SES girls on this issue. Here are some comments from those who would accept cohabitation without legal marriage:

> "It wouldn't bother me in the least! I'm not religious. Marriage has no meaning for me!"
>
> Marina: 15 years old, Montreal

> "I would agree. I'd like that better than marriage." (translation)
>
> Jeanne: 17 years old, Montreal

I. Life Without Marriage

Although 87% of the Canadian population marries by the age of thirty,[4] a growing number of Canadians have been avoiding or postponing marriage in recent years.[5] In an attempt to find out how open these adolescents were to living their adult lives outside the institution of marriage, we asked them what they would do if they had not met anyone they wanted to marry by the age of thirty-five.

Fifty per cent of the girls (and 57% of the boys) said that it would be no problem if they had not married by the age of thirty-five. Nineteen per cent of the girls and 25% of the boys stated that they would keep looking for a partner, in the hope that they would soon meet someone. Another 18% of the girls and 7% of the boys said that they would soon meet someone. Another 18% of the girls and 7% of the boys said that they would be upset or depressed. The rest of the adolescents gave a variety of answers, such as saying that they planned to be married well before age thirty-five and therefore this situation would never happen to them. A few others said that they would only marry if they met a very special person.

Here are some of the more extreme comments from the interviews about what they would do if they had not met anyone they wanted to marry by the time they were thirty-five years old:

"I'd be **so** unhappy! I'd go back to India and teach music or something only a single person would do. People would think I was **so strange.** I wouldn't want my friends to see me and feel sorry for me!"

Clare: 16 years old, Toronto

"Oh, boy! My parents would consider me to be an old maid! I guess I'd move out and get my own apartment. My career would be my only goal in life."

Elaine: 17 years old, Montreal

"Oh, I'd be so unhappy! I'd start to wonder about myself! I'd start looking real fast. I wouldn't be so picky about the guy. Though, not just any joe!"

Belinda: 16 years old, Halifax

"I'd be unhappy because I want children before thirty. I can't see myself working just for myself. My children would be my goal. I think I'd be really discouraged. That would be a life for which I'm really not prepared." (translation)

Lucielle: 19 years old, Montreal

The adolescents who reacted negatively to life outside of marriage were more likely to come from two-parent families. For example, 22% (16) of the girls who came from two-parent families said that they would be depressed if they weren't married by age thirty-five, while 13% (6) from one-parent families gave this answer. Thirty-one per cent of the French-Canadian girls said that they would be upset if they weren't married by that age, compared to 11% of the English-Canadian girls, 10% of the Native girls, and 24% of the girls from other ethnic groups. Thus, there seemed to be some cultural differences regarding the pressures to marry, but it would take a large and random sample of youths before we could state this with real confidence.

J. Anticipation of Divorce

Despite the fact that in 1979 there was one divorce for every three marriages in Canada,[6] most adolescents in our study did not anticipate that their marriage would end in divorce. In fact, most gave very unrealistic scenarios when we asked what they would do if their spouse left them. Although one girl from Toronto told us that they had been discussing divorce in their "Man and Society" class the week before the interview, there was little evidence from the interviews that many adolescents were aware of the high probabilities of divorce in their future lives or of the financial difficulties experienced by many divorced women with children.[7]

Since divorce rates have soared in Canada in the past fifteen years, we asked the adolescents what they would do if their spouse left them after five years of marriage. We categorized their comments into those showing more concern and those showing less concern.

Sixty per cent of the girls and 40% of the boys did not appear to think that a divorce would seriously affect their lives. Here are some answers from those who appeared less concerned about the impact of divorce, to the question of what they would do if their spouse left them after a five-year marriage:

> "What am I supposed to do? I'd live with it! He loses, not me . . . It's hard to imagine."
>
> Cheryl: 16 years old, Vancouver

> "I would have noticed before. That situation doesn't seem very probable to me. I would have noticed the problem beforehand and we would have talked about it. But if he left I'd roll up my sleeves and find a way to make money . . . and feed the children." (translation)
>
> Julie: 17 years old, rural Quebec

"More power to him! There's nothing really I could do. Just don't come back!"

Jennifer: 18 years old, Toronto

In our study, the daughters of full-time homemakers seemed to be most concerned about the possibility of divorce. Those most upset or concerned about divorce either expressed explicit fear, were very undecided and worried about what they would do, or made vindictive comments about what they would do to their spouse. Here are some of the comments by the girls showing concern about what they would do if their husband left them after five years of marriage:

"I'd be pretty afraid. I wouldn't know where to turn."

Cathy: 16 years old, rural Ontario

"I'd commit suicide. I'd still love him and I'm sure I'd become very depressed. I'd go home to my mother and I'd cry. Unconsciously, I would wait. One thing's for sure, I'd never go out with boys again." (translation)

Colette: 17 years old, Montreal

"He'd be sorry! I'd sue him for everything he's worth!"

Paula: 17 years old, Dartmouth

The boys we interviewed seemed more concerned about the possibility of divorce than the girls did. Sixty per cent of the boys and 40% of the girls made comments to show that they considered divorce to be a serious problem. Here are some of the comments from the boys:

"That's a hard one. I don't know . . . I'd have to give her what she wanted. I'd have to talk to her to find out why she's so unhappy."

Roy: 19 years old, Toronto

"I'd fight her in court for our possessions and custody of the children, if there were any. If she leaves, she leaves it all!"

Don: 19 years old, Halifax

"If the circumstances were good, I'd shoot her and skip town."

Paul: 18 years old, Dartmouth

"That's why I'd never get married."

Bob: 19 years old, Toronto

K. Having Children

Although about 90% of Canadian women who marry bear at least one child,[8] studies have suggested that there has been a slight increase in those who remain childless by choice.[9] The birthrate has been declining since the turn of the century so that bearing more than two children is becoming increasingly uncommon.

1. Planned Pregnancies

Sixty-nine per cent of the adolescents overall expected to have children at the age of thirty, with 72% (86) of the girls and 54% (15) of the boys stating this with some certainty. Another 8% (12) of the adolescents suggested that they would probably have their children after the age of thirty. Eight per cent (12) were not sure and 15% (23) did not plan to have any children or at least did not mention having children in the interview. Most adolescents planned to have two children, but 5% (7) wanted more than three. The girls from higher SES families and most of the boys planned to have their children between the ages of twenty-five and thirty, but the lower SES girls expected to have their children between nineteen and twenty-two years of age.

Not only were the girls more likely than the boys to state definitely that they wanted children, but they were also able to provide details of their ages

and in some cases the preferred sex of the children. From the projected ages of their children, we could infer that most girls expect to start having their children around the age of twenty-four to twenty-five years, and to space them a couple of years apart.

Here are some comments from the interviews of girls who are certain that they will have children by the age of thirty:

> (At age thirty) "I'll get up at 6:00 and get all six kids their breakfast. My boyfriend wants a lot of kids, too! . . ."
>
> Sarah: 18 years old, Toronto

> (At age thirty) "I'd have three children ages 7, 5, and 3. I may have been married and probably divorced. I don't wish for that to happen, but if I look around at most Haitian couples, that's the case." (translation)
>
> Rea: 17 years old, Montreal

Girls who wanted children were more likely to be French Canadian than English Canadian (88% or 14 compared to 68% or 32). Eighty per cent (8) of the Native girls and 69% (29) of the girls from other ethnic groups also expected to have children by the age of thirty. Coinciding with their marriage plans, more rural than urban girls expected to have children when they were thirty (83% compared to 69%). A few of the girls expected to have children but no husband.

About 28% of the girls and 44% of the boys did not expect to have children at the age of thirty. Here are some of their comments on this issue:

> "I don't want a husband or kids – none of my own anyways. Don't want no stretch marks!"
>
> Gail: 17 years old, Vancouver

> "I don't like kids, particularly. And I don't like the idea of living in one place with one person . . . I want to travel and write."
>
> Julia: 15 years old, Montreal

2. Accidental Pregnancy

Despite the fact that there has been a decline in unanticipated pregnancies among teenagers in Canada, an increasing number of teen mothers are keeping their babies.[10] Teenage pregnancy generally means that education is curtailed, earning power remains low, and poverty follows. While attitudes towards single mothers have become more liberal in recent years, many studies show that the teen mother who keeps her child can anticipate many social and economic problems for years after her pregnancy.[11] How aware of these potential problems were the teenagers we interviewed?

When we asked the adolescents what they would do if they (or in the case of the boys, their girlfriend) got pregnant by accident, we discovered that about one half of the girls and about one third of the boys would want to keep the child (see Table 4). Whether or not they married seemed to be less important. There was little awareness of the difficulties of raising a child before completing one's education, before finding work, or before marriage.

> "I wouldn't get an abortion. I don't think. Everybody talks about it at school. What **would** I do? Probably put it up for adoption or keep it, but I wouldn't get married!"
>
> Cheryl: 16 years old, Vancouver

> "I would keep the child. I wouldn't "kill" it by having an abortion – even with a child, I would strive to succeed and fulfil my ambition." (translation)
>
> Jeanne: 17 years old, Montreal

Rural girls were more likely than urban girls to plan to keep the baby (63% compared to 45%). Native and French-Canadian girls were more likely than English Canadians or other ethnic groups to want to keep the baby and raise it on their own if they got pregnant by accident.

Table 4: "What Would You Do If You (or Your Partner) Got Pregnant by Accident?" (by Sex)

	Female	Male
Abortion	27.9% (34)	7.1% (2)
Keep the baby	49.2% (60)	32.1% (9)
Adoption	4.1% (5)	0
It wouldn't happen!	7.4% (9)	7.1% (2)
Offer girlfriend moral and financial support	—	35.7% (10)
Don't know	11.5% (14)	17.9% (5)
Total	100% (122)	100% (28)

About 28% of the girls would consider having an abortion under certain circumstances. Many felt that if they were still in school or still financially dependent on their parents they would have an abortion. But only two boys (out of 27) said that they would try to persuade their girlfriend to have an abortion. Here are two comments about what they would do if they got pregnant by accident:

"I'd have an abortion! No question!"

Marina: 15 years old, Montreal

"It'd depend. I might get an abortion. It would depend on my life at the time. It would be bad for the kid if no one wanted him or her."

Frances: 17 years old, Winnipeg

Only 4% (5) of the girls and none of the boys said that they would be in favour of putting the child up for adoption. This alternative seems to be no longer necessary for most adolescent girls, since they may be able to get an abortion or to obtain financial assistance from the government to raise the child.

Only 7% (11) of the adolescents (no sex differences) said that there would be no pregnancy because they would take precautions or would not indulge in premarital sex. Despite the fact that there were no clear-cut class differences in their response to an unexpected pregnancy, girls with professionally employed mothers were most likely to say that accidental pregnancy would not happen to them (20% or 4). None of the daughters of manual labourer mothers gave this response.

Boys were less likely than girls to know what they would do if there were a pregnancy as they apparently had thought less about the issue than girls had. However, 36% of the boys said that they would stand by their girlfriends, giving the moral and financial support to enable the girl to do what she saw fit. But these boys would not interfere with what they saw as the woman's decision. However, other boys were less certain of what they would do or if they would leave their girlfriend. Here are some of the boys' comments about what they would do if their girlfriend got pregnant by accident:

"That's a difficult question. (clearly embarrassed) It wouldn't happen. But . . . I guess . . . I'd get married."

John: 18 years old, Toronto

"I don't know! Leave her, or skip town. Face it! I don't know!"

Jack: 18 years old, Dartmouth

"Keep living with her or get married."

Doug: 16 years old, Ottawa

3. Arranging Child Care

Having children is one thing, but what then? Depending on whether women work in the home or in the labour force, their problems with child-rearing may be different. Finding high-quality child care at an affordable rate has been a continual difficulty for parents and single mothers working outside the home. With these problems in mind, we were curious about how the adolescents thought they would organize their child care at the age of thirty.

The adolescents essentially gave three different answers. Thirty-two per cent planned to stay at home and care for their own children (or the boys expected that their wife would stay at home); 50% expected to hire baby-sitters or take their children to day care centres; and 18% anticipated no further problems with child care during the daytime because they thought that their children would be going to school. Let us look at each group separately.

a) The Woman/Wife Stays at Home

While 29% of the girls in the study expected to be looking after their own children at the age of thirty, 50% of the boys expected their future wives to be at home. In particular, the older boys in the study (17 to 19 years) felt that their future wives would stay at home while the children were young. Here are two comments from the interviews presenting the woman at home:

> "My wife will be at home all day. When the kids are in school, she'll work part time. When the kids are older, she'll work full time."
>
> David: 18 years old, rural Ontario

"I'd probably be married, with a little baby. I want to get married about 28 or 30 . . . I'll be caring for the kid . . ."

Marg: 16 years old, Vancouver

b) **Baby-sitters or Day Care**

Fifty-three per cent of the girls and 43% of the boys expected that they would hire someone to look after their children during the day. Here are some comments about baby-sitters from girls whose mothers work outside the home:

(At age thirty) "I'm married. I have one child aged one or two. I work and my baby-sitter comes to my home every day. She's a woman I know very well . . ." (translation)

Lise: 15 years old, rural Quebec

"One child will be in school, and the other two will have a sitter . . . but I want six children. I'll take off three months after the birth of each child."

Rhonda: 16 years old, Montreal

However, some girls were ambivalent about hired child care. Some suggested that they would prefer their mother to look after their child, but this was not always a realistic expectation. Here is an example from Faye, whose mother is a housewife:

"I'll take the kids to nursery school and hopefully go to work. I'll be a child psychologist in a clinic . . . This is hard, because I **want** to work and I **want** to have kids. But I **don't** like the idea of day care. After lunch, I'd drop them off at Grandma's house or it would be nice to work half-days . . ."

Faye: 18 years old, Winnipeg

Let us look in more detail at which girls were most likely to want to hire someone to care for their children in the future. Girls living in the city were more likely than rural girls to prefer working for pay and sending their children to baby-sitters. Those living in central Canada, especially in the cities, also were more likely to have this expectation. Foreign-born girls and French-Canadian girls

tended to prefer sitters to caring for their own children. Those from one-parent homes also planned to use hired child care more than those from two-parent homes.

c) Children at School

Eighteen per cent of the girls and 7% of the boys assumed that when they were thirty years old their children would be in school and that they would then have no child care problems. Here are their comments:

> "I would have two children – nine and seven – (at age thirty). The children would be at school . . . I would be reading and watching soap operas, and cleaning a little . . . I'm trying to remember what my mother does . . ."
>
> Joanne: 15 years old, rural Ontario

> "I have to get my kid ready for school (at age thirty). I'll watch the kid go off the school. As soon as everybody's out, I'd clean up and go back to bed. I'll get up around lunchtime . . ."
>
> Wanda: 15 years old, rural Manitoba

Fewer boys than girls expected their children to be in school when they were thirty. However, boys planned to marry later than the girls and to have their families later in life.

The males and the females in our study did not entirely agree with each other on the topic of child care. Although both sexes saw child care as "women's work", as adolescents have in other recent studies,[12] boys were more likely to express the view that their future wives should look after the children at home. At the same time, boys were more likely than girls to say that housework should be shared.

L. Division of Labour in the Home

Studies from Canada, the United States, and Britain all have concluded that housework is still considered to be the responsibility of women even if their husbands assist them. When women work in the labour force, their husbands contribute little more to the regular maintenance of the household than they would if their wives were at home. Even when husbands assist their wives, the responsibility for the vacuuming, ironing, dusting, washing dishes, and preparing meals usually falls on the wife's shoulders.[13]

Since more than half of married women are now working for pay outside the home, one might expect that this pattern of domestic labour would be changing. From the interviews with adolescents, we were interested to see how they envisaged their division of labour at the age of thirty, and whether or not they planned to retain this traditional division of labour.

From the diaries at age thirty, we were able to surmise how the adolescents planned to divide the household chores even if they did not directly tell us. However, we later asked them explicitly what they would do if they ended up doing all the housework alone. We received some illuminating and rather contradictory answers.

From the diaries, we found that about half of both the girls and the boys in the study seemed to expect the wife to do most of the housework. Although more boys than girls said that the housework would be shared (38% compared to 24%), more girls than boys said their spouse would help them with the housework (25% compared to 6.3%). This comment implied to us that the girls saw housework as their job or responsibility. Three adolescents said that they would hire a cleaning woman to do the housework, but no one suggested hiring a cleaning man. Generally, the responsibility for housework was seen as women's work (see Table 5).

If we divide their answers into those who expect to maintain a traditional division of labour (with the wife doing the housework), those who plan to share the housework equally, and those who hire outside help, we can better discuss the variations in their perspectives.

1. Traditional Division of Labour

Forty-nine per cent of the girls and 50% of the boys expected to have a traditional division of labour at the age of thirty. Another 25% of the girls suggested that their husbands would "help them", implying that the responsibility was primarily theirs.

The older males in the studies who came from two-parent families clearly expected their future wives to do the housework. Native people of both sexes also viewed housework as women's work. Coming from a family in which mother is a housewife and does all the housework herself seems to influence the ideas of the adolescents, making them more accepting of the idea that housework should be done by women.

Table 5: Division of Labour in the Home (From Diaries of Life at Age Thirty), by Sex

	Female	Male
Housework shared	24.0% (24)	37.5% (6)
Spouse helps	25.0% (25)	6.3% (1)
Wife does housework	49.0% (49)	50.0% (8)
Hire a cleaning woman	2.0% (2)	6.3% (1)
Total	100% (100)	100% (16)

Many adolescents did not see any contradiction between the expectation that housework is women's work and the expectation of having a successful career. The best example came from Rhonda, the 16-year-old Montreal girl, who expected to have six children, maintain her career as a lawyer, and do all the housework herself, according to her scenario at age thirty. When we explicitly asked her later about how she would feel about doing all the housework alone, she answered: "I'd expect to do the housework. . . . (pause) . . . If we had enough money, I'd hire a housekeeper." Less than one quarter of the girls and one quarter of the boys said that they wouldn't mind doing the housework alone if there was a good reason why their spouse couldn't do it.

> "It really wouldn't bother me to do all the housework, because my husband would have a job that involves a lot of work, and he would be tired when he got home."
>
> Betty: 15 years old, rural Nova Scotia

> "My wife would work, but if there was no day care she would stay home to look after them (the children) . . . I'll help my wife with the housework, but it'll depend how tired I am when I get home at night." (translation)
>
> Laurent: 17 years old, Montreal

2. Sharing of Housework

Twenty-five per cent of the girls and 38% of the boys indicated that housework would be shared when they are thirty years old. If we look at those who said that housework would be shared in their future home, we found that they most often came from urban areas, from wealthier families with highly educated parents and a professionally employed mother, and from girls who planned to have professional careers themselves. One third of the girls from an English-Canadian background felt that housework should be shared while only one Native girl (out of ten interviewed) said that housework would be shared. Those living in the West and those who came from divorced families also tended to be egalitarian on this issue of housework. This was true for the three boys from one-parent homes, as all of

them said that housework should be shared. Here are some of the adolescents' comments on shared housework:

> "I'd be living with a male – my husband. He helps around the house and isn't a male chauvinist . . . If he works later than I, I'd start dinner. But if he gets home first, he would."
>
> Glenda: 15 years old, Toronto

> "I'd be really angry! (if she had to do all the housework) I'd demand equality! I wouldn't do it!"
>
> Clare: 16 years old, Toronto

> "I go home (at age thirty), pick up my kids, make dinner half the time . . . My wife gets home same time as me – maybe a little later . . ."
>
> Jim: 15 years old, Vancouver

Although 40% of the adolescents explicitly said that housework should be shared, their personal diaries did not show equal **responsibility** for domestic work. Fifty per cent of the males expected their wives to stay home and care for the children. Presumably their wives would also be doing the housework at the same time. Several girls who said that they wanted the housework to be shared described themselves doing everything around the house except drying the supper dishes. Their definitions of "shared housework" were certainly fairly limited.

3. Hiring a Cleaning Woman

Only two girls and one boy mentioned that they would hire a cleaning woman to do their housework, when they presented a typical day at the age of thirty. However, if a dispute arose about who was expected to do the housework, more adolescents said they would be willing to hire help. For example, in the question about what they would do if they were expected to do all the housework alone, about 40% of both sexes said that they would be very unhappy or would refuse to do it. Under those circumstances, 15% of the girls and 26% of the boys would hire a cleaning woman. Here is a comment from the interviews:

"I hate cleaning the house . . . That's why I'd live with him first. If he was lazy and belligerent about it, I wouldn't marry him. If he got that way after, I'd hire a maid with what money I had. But if I had time, I'd probably just do it."

Beryl: 17 years old, Vancouver

M. Leisure Activities in the Future

Since adult women are often occupied with child care and housework when they are not at their paid job, they have less leisure time than men do. We wanted to see how adolescent girls expected to fill their leisure hours at the age of thirty, and to see if they were aware of the lack of time which they might have for themselves, expecially if they worked for pay and had children. We also wanted to compare the expectations of leisure for males and females, to see if the currrent adult pattern of sex differences in leisure activities still holds with adolescents as they envision their own adulthood. From their weekday at the age of thirty, we were able to ascertain what they thought they would be doing in their leisure time. We recorded the first three activities they mentioned, and then looked at which adolescents were most likely to participate in that activity. Table 6 looks at the percentage of males and females who first mentioned certain activities.

For both sexes, watching television was their most frequent choice of leisure activity when they were thirty (37% of the girls compared to 30% of the boys). Reflecting their present situation, more rural adolescents of both sexes expected to watch television than did those who lived in urban areas. This may indicate a lack of recreational facilities for rural adolescents. Here are two comments from the interviews:

"Sometimes I'll go out with my husband or children. But mostly I'll watch T.V."

Clara: 18 years old, Vancouver

"I'll sit around and watch T.V. with my husband and kid. Maybe go out visiting friends . . . "

Wanda: 15 years old, rural Manitoba

Besides watching television, more males expected that they would be playing sports when they were thirty (22% mentioned this first, compared to 4% of the females). This is probably a realistic expectation for girls, since fewer athletic facilities and organizations exist for adult women than for men, less social pressure is exerted on women to play sports, and women tend to be more involved in caring for their families, which gives them less time for sports, especially team or organized sports.

Table 6: First Mentioned Leisure Activity At Age Thirty, by Sex

	Female	Male
Television	37.3% (44)	29.6% (8)
Family activities	31.4% (37)	7.4% (2)
Sports	4.2% (5)	22.6% (6)
Movies	7.6% (9)	11.1% (3)
Seeing friends	6.8% (8)	14.8% (4)
Reading	5.9% (7)	3.7% (1)
Shopping	1.7% (2)	0
Other	5.1% (6)	11.1% (3)
Total	100% (118)	100% (27)

Thirty-one per cent of the girls and only 7% of the boys immediately suggested that a good portion of their leisure time would be spent with their children and their spouse, just being together as a family. However, boys also gave this as their second or third choice of leisure activities.

> "I'll spend some time with my man. I'll watch T.V. and read. But I'll also be involved in some cause – like nuclear disarmament or feminism."
>
> Christine: 17 years old, Ottawa

> "Maybe watch T.V. or read a book to the kids or to myself. Then go to bed."
>
> Bill: 15 years old, Vancouver

> "Play with the kids, put them to bed. And then watch T.V. or read."
>
> Helen: 15 years old, Toronto

In both of the lists of their present activities and those they expected to be doing, more girls than boys mentioned doing housework. Although this activity was not systematically recorded as one of their "leisure activities" (because it was not viewed by the interviewers as **leisure**), it later became clear that a few girls considered it as such, seemingly because it would be done when and how they wanted. It became apparent that maintaining the household is not only seen as a woman's job, but it is not always perceived as "work". Some girls in this study seemed to perceive looking after the house more as a hobby.

Here are some more general comments about what the adolescents think they will be doing in their leisure time at the age of thirty:

> "I'll be living in a large house in the country, with a sauna and an Irish wolfhound . . . I'll have a fantastic stereo set which I'll listen to, or maybe go to a movie or a play or the ballet . . . "
>
> Pete: 18 years old, rural Ontario

"The child goes to bed at 7 o'clock. Afterwards, I talk with my husband. Communication is very important for a couple. Our weekends are very active, with all sorts of sports activities . . ." (translation)

Lise: 15 years old, rural Quebec

"Play with the kids – I hope I'm a good mother! I'll be reading . . . watching T.V. Once a week, I'll go to my university course. I don't want to go out a lot while the kids are young."

Miriam: 17 years old, Montreal

Because there were so many different leisure activities mentioned, it was difficult to find social class or ethnic differences in leisure activities. The primary activities mentioned by all groups were television viewing, family activities, and – for the males – sports activities.

N. Where They Would Live

Where people live certainly affects their job opportunities, their leisure activities, and their lifestyle in general. Although this information was not specifically asked for, some adolescents told us where they wanted to live. It seemed that most adolescents from large cities (except Ottawa) wanted to remain in that same city.[14] Those who had travelled to other provinces or out of the country and those who had lived in other countries were more likely to consider living somewhere else. Adolescents from higher SES families, even when they had not yet travelled outside the country, seemed more open to the idea of living in another country, province or city. Those who came from lower SES families were especially likely to want to stay in the place where they lived at the time of the interview, close to their relatives. More girls than boys expressed concern about moving away from their parents in the future; this was especially true for French-Canadian girls. In some cases where girls wanted to live in a different place, they suggested that their parents or their mother might accompany them. Charmane, a 17-year-old East Indian from Montreal, wanted to go to Vancouver and study medicine. At the age of thirty, she expected to be practising medicine in Vancouver and supporting her mother.

The proportion of rural adolescents considering living in a town was greater than that of urban adolescents thinking of living in the country. However, a number of rural girls mentioned that they would not want to live in a large city because it would not be a good place to raise children. Several of them planned to live in small towns.

Almost all of the adolescents who mentioned their home said that they wanted to own rather than rent. Most expected to live in a large house with a spacious yard. This is clearly an unrealistic expectation since the cost of housing and mortgages is so high. Those who wanted to live in an urban area generally chose a suburban residential area rather than the city core.

Here are some of the comments about where they want to live in the future:

> "I'll be living in the suburbs (of Montreal) in my own house."
>
> Juliet: 17 years old, Montreal

> (Where do you live?) "In a suburb. No. In a big old house with a big backyard . . . near Jericho Beach."
>
> Joan: 18 years old, Vancouver

> "I'll be living in Toronto . . . or New York or Paris. I'll be a newspaper reporter or work for External Affairs . . . "
>
> Andrea: 16 years old, Toronto

> "I'll be living in the States somewhere. I'll have a nice home, a sports car, and a secure job . . . "
>
> George: 17 years old, Winnipeg

A Native girl had her own distinct goals for a place to live in the future:

> "I would like to live in the woods . . . I know life in the woods is hard, but my love for the forest is stronger than anything else." (translation)
>
> Mariette: 16 years old, rural Quebec

O. What They Want Most in the Future

After the adolescents gave us a verbal account of a typical weekday at the age of thirty, we asked them to tell us what they wanted most in the future. Although they had already described to us in some detail various aspects of their future aspirations, we wanted them to articulate their most important goals to see how this might foreshadow, shape, and affect their future. We saw that there were three major patterns of lifestyle envisioned: those who emphasized their marriage and family life, those who emphasized their job or career ambitions in the labour force, and those who focused on other things, such as wealth, a nice house, happiness or world peace. Forty-five per cent of the girls and 18% of the boys emphasized the importance of a strong relationship and a happy family life. Twenty-six per cent of the girls and 39% of the boys focused on a challenging job. And, 29% of the girls and 43% of the boys mentioned a variety of other goals. Table 7 shows what the girls and boys in the study valued most in the future.

We can get a better understanding of the priorities of the girls themselves by first looking at the details of each kind of typical day and then looking at what they say they want most in the future.

Table 7: What Adolescents Want Most In The Future, by Sex

	Females	Males
Good marriage and family life	45.4% (54)	17.9% (5)
Good job	26.1% (31)	39.3% (11)
Other*	28.6% (34)	42.9% (12)
Total	100% (119)	100% (28)

* Includes money (8.2%), happiness (12.7%), peace (2.7%), friends (2.7%), and a nice house (4.8%). The percentage of entire sample saying "other" was 31.1%.

P. Typical Day in the Future: Focus of Marriage and Family

Since nearly half of the girls in the study explicitly said that a happy home life and a good marriage were the most important things to them in the future, we will give two typical examples of girls who emphasized this aspect of the future. Their depictions of the details of a weekday at age thirty give us some indication of their aspirations and expectations of their future lifestyle.

The first example of a day in the future comes from 16-year-old Kathy, who lives in Toronto. Her father holds an office job and her mother is a housewife.

Both parents have a British background. This girl was in Grade 11 at the time of the interview, and although she received a 90% average last year and could be working towards a high-level professional job, she felt that she should be home with her children at the age of thirty. We also interviewed her brother, who planned to be an architect. He also made it quite clear that his future wife would be expected to stay home with the children, while he pursued his career. Both brother and sister were members of a Protestant church group for young people.

> "At 6:30 or 7:00 I'll get up and get breakfast for myself and my family – if I have one. I'll get them ready for work, and then I'll go to work at the drug store – part-time." (She wants to be a pharmacist.) (How many kids do you have?) "Two. Both are under five." (Pause) "Well . . . maybe I would be a housewife if my kids were under five. I won't be working until the youngest is 13 or 14 . . ." (Pause) "Well, I might be working at night or part time, if they were under five. My husband would look after them in the evening." (O.K., let's assume that your children are under five). "Well, I guess I'll be doing housework during the day . . . washing . . . or studying. I'll be spending time with the kids, doing hobbies, or reading. We'll be living in the country, if my husband was a farmer." (What if he wasn't?) "If he worked in the city, then we'd live in the city."
>
> Kathy: 16 years old, Toronto

When we asked what she wanted most in the future, Kathy answered, "A family – children and a husband." Kathy planned to focus her life around her husband's job and her children for at least fifteen years after the birth of her first child. If she finished her pharmacy training at twenty-two years, she might be working only three years on a full-time basis before leaving the labour force for fifteen years. If she continued to work part time, she might have no difficulty returning to full-time work later if she chose to. But if she did not work part time, her training would be obsolete after fifteen years. If she moved to the country, she may have even more difficulty finding work or hiring a baby-sitter if she worked part time when her husband was busy. The gaps and pauses in this interview indicated that this was the first time she had tried to think out these parts of the future, and as she discussed her plans she immediately recognized the inconsistencies.

A second example of a girl who gave priority to her family life was 16-year-old Nancy from an Irish skilled labour family in Winnipeg. Her mother had died five years earlier and she was living with her stepsister, twin brothers, and her "step-mom". Nancy was a C- student in Grade 11, and planned to become a nurse.

> "I wouldn't be working because I wouldn't want to send my kids to day care. So I get up and make breakfast. My husband would go to work. We'd live in a big house. My oldest kid would probably be five. I'd clean up the house and go out with the younger kids to the store, or just to play. I'd meet my friends for lunch downtown. We'd sit and talk and then go home. I'd spend the afternoon with friends and their kids, visiting. Then I'd go home around four and start supper."
>
> "We'd both do the dishes, take the kids to the park or something, and then put them to bed. We'd spend the evening watching T.V. or just being together." (When do you do the housework?) "On Saturdays, we'd share the big clean-up. Once the kids are around 12, I'd want to work again. If we could afford it, that would be a good life!"

When we asked her what she wanted most in the future, Nancy answered:

> "Probably to have a family – three kids!"
>
> Nancy: 16 years old, Winnipeg

Those adolescents who wanted to focus their lives around their family were primarily girls. However, they were particularly likely to be girls from two-parent families whose mothers were not in the paid labour force or who had been working more than ten years and disliked their jobs. A disproportionate number were immigrants or came from Native or backgrounds other than British. As well, proportionately more school leavers than students were in this category.

Q. A Typical Day in the Future: Focus on Paid Work

More boys than girls focused their future lives around their paid work. Among the females, those with mothers who liked their paid jobs were more likely

to be in this category. More girls from one-parent households wanted to orient their lives around their work, as did those who were only or younger children, especially if they had no brothers. Students rather than drop-outs, and girls living in rural areas (as well as boys), were more likely to be in this category.

An example of a girl who focused her life around her work was 15-year-old Gilda living in rural Ontario. She was in Grade 9 with a B- average, and wanted to be either the first woman leader of a corps in the militia or an astronomer. Her father was a skilled worker and her mother was involved in writing and crafts. She gave two potential scenarios for the future, depending on which career she chooses:

> "If I'm in the militia, I'll get up at 4:30 a.m., get into my uniform, and get breakfast. If I'm an officer in a female corps, I'll be teaching all day. I'll be living in the barracks . . . We'll eat as a group. At 9:45 in the evening, I'll get them to bed and then I'll have free time." (What will you do then?) "I'll probably phone my mom, and then prepare my lessons for the next day. I'll go to sleep around 10:30."
>
> "If I go into astronomy, I'll get up around 6:00 and have breakfast and get ready. I'll go to the observatory at 9:00. They'll be recording what's been happening the night before, so I'll have to do calculations and look through the telescope. I'll get home around 7:00." (What will you do then?) "I'll be relaxing. Maybe I'll have a lecture to prepare. I'll own a house in Toronto. Maybe I'll be travelling." (Pause) (What about your personal life?) "Oh . . . I might be married, but I don't know about kids. But I might still be single." (What do you want most in the future?) "Ambition . . . a goal . . . a challenging job!"
>
> Gilda: 15 years old, rural Ontario

In her room she had maps of the stars on her walls. She said that she read astronomy books and most admired a female astronomer who had written books on the stars.

The second example of a girl who oriented her future scenario around her work was Anne, a 15-year-old from Vancouver. She had lived in a one-parent family but at the time of the interview she lived with a female friend of her mother's, the woman's boyfriend, and the woman's father. Anne was a C- student

in Grade 11 but planned to go to college to take a diploma in "Tourism and Hospitality". Here was her typical weekday:

> "I'd get up, have a shower, dry my hair, put on my make-up, curl my hair, get dressed, and cook breakfast." (For yourself?) "Probably for a kid . . . 4 or 5 years old. Then I make him lunch and we'd leave by car . . . He's going to school or day care. So we'd probably leave at 8:00. I'd drop him off and go to work." (At what?) "Hopefully at a travel agency . . . I make bookings, travel arrangements. Then I'd have lunch. No, when's coffee break? Before lunch? I'd have a coffee break . . . Then I work until lunch. You want to hear about lunch? . . . I go out to lunch at the White Spot, with my sister, or someone I work with, or a friend. Then I go back to work and work until work ends . . . about 4:30 or 5:00. I pick up the kid . . . oh, I almost forgot about him! . . . from day care. I go home, cook dinner." (Do you shop for food on the way home?) "No, I do that on the weekends. I make dinner, do the dishes, and then spend time with the kid. Then I put him to bed . . . around 7:30 or 8:00." (Do you talk on the phone?) "I guess I would, to a friend." (Where's the child's father?) "Probably not around!" (How do you feel about your life at thirty?) "I feel satisfied with it. Well . . . " (Mixed feelings?) "Yeah . . . " (What do you want most in the future?) "A good job . . . with good pay and decent hours . . . 9 to 5. Paid holidays and sick leave. I guess it would be unionized . . . "
>
> Anne: 15 years old, Vancouver

Those who focused on their job in the future usually did not plan to take much time off work when they had children (if they wanted children). Most expected to postpone child-bearing until their career was established. A few girls who gave this type of description did not plan to marry or have children at all.

R. A Typical Day in the Future: Focus on Other Goals

Although 72% of the females in this study focused on family or work when discussing their future lives, other things were also valued. Some adolescents mentioned the importance of having sufficient money to travel, to buy a large house, or to live "comfortably". Others mentioned friends, happiness or world peace. Males were more likely than females (43% compared to 29%) to focus on

things other than family; for example, expressing a desire to be "successful", to be rich, to win the lottery, or to own property. Here are some examples of what the males in the study wanted most in the future:

> "... to be a big success. To have money to afford things I wanted. To have a good, stable life. It's terrible, but ... I'd like to make lots of money. The stock market is my hobby."
>
> Lorne: 19 years old, Montreal

> "... to leave the architect's firm and live on a farm full time. At least farm part time."
>
> John: 18 years old, Toronto

> "To be well-off ... a car, my own home, money for vacations ... for everyday activities."
>
> Jack: 18 years old, Dartmouth

> "A nice big farm."
>
> Bill: 15 years old, Vancouver

Girls who emphasized neither family nor money in the future often focused on personal happiness, having a nice house, and a few mentioned world peace. Here are some of their comments. The first is Julia, a 15-year-old girl from a professional family in Montreal. Both of her parents have post-graduate university degrees, and her mother did volunteer work. Although Julia emphasized "enjoying herself" when we explicitly asked her what was most important to her, she actually emphasized her work in this scenario:

> "I'd get up at 6:45, get ready, and have breakfast. Then I'd go to work. But I don't know where. If I'm a journalist, it could be in a foreign country. I don't have to have a stationary home. I intend to do quite a bit of travelling. Maybe I'll live with a male, or alone – with a dog. I probably won't be married, and I probably won't have kids. I don't like kids particularly, and I don't like the idea of living in one place with one person. I want to travel and write. I don't want to have children and ship them off to a day care

centre . . . I might share an apartment, too . . . I might be an archaeologist or a writer."

"After work, I'll do what I do now. Either go out to the theatre with friends, or write, or read, draw or go out somewhere. I'll go to bed around 11:00 . . ." (What do you want most in the future?) "Enjoying what I do! Even if I end up being married with two kids, I hope I enjoy it!"

Julia: 15 years old, Montreal

Because so many males focused on "other" things, let us look at an example of a 16-year-old Native boy from rural Quebec who said that he wanted to work for the well-being of Native people. He came from a family with five brothers and sisters, and his parents had little formal education. Here is his typical weekday:

"...live in a camp or have a well-outfitted tent here _____. Maybe I'd be married and have one child. One is enough. If there are any jobs available, I'll work, of course. I'd look very hard for a job and I'd give my name to many employers. I wouldn't rely on my wife to cook the meals. In the woods, I learned to prepare meat and bake bread. At thirty, I wouldn't be happy because I would have lost my youth and my friends. We won't go to the same places at night. It'll be fancier bars where people don't speak to each other or know each other. In the bars I go to now, everybody knows everyone else, we lend each other cigarettes. I want to work for the welfare of Indians like my father does. My father looks for contracts to find work for Indians. I would like to be a councillor or a band leader. I would like to provide work to at least one Indian." (translation)

Philippe: 16 years old, rural Quebec

S. Conclusion: Visions of Their Future Personal Life

To summarize the findings of our interviews on personal life, most adolescents in this study who were high school students focused their lives around their school work and their school-related friends and activities. Those involved in many extracurricular activities tended to be the better students and those from higher SES families. Males joined more clubs and school teams than females did.

In their leisure time, girls spent a considerable amount of time watching television, with many mentioning that they watched "soap operas". Some unemployed adolescent women watched television for as much as ten hours each day. Although boys also watched television, they were more involved than girls in sports activities, most of which were school teams, and spent more time out with their friends. Both sexes seemed to place a high value on socializing, and met their friends at their school lockers, in the cafeteria, at shopping plazas, and in their own homes.

When they tried to imagine their future lives, they sometimes assumed that their present priorities and interests would carry over into the future. For example, one girl said about her life at age thirty: "I guess I'd have the same hairstyle." Another said that she would have to work, so that she could have money "for things like . . . like . . . jeans." Many boys expected that they would be as actively involved in sports as they were at the present. Both sexes expected that they would spend as much of their time watching television as they do now.

However, males and females created somewhat different scenarios. Although girls said that they wanted to work full time as well as marry and have a family, they tended to focus on their future family life. They described the details of their husband's job and personality, their children's ages and gender, and their future house. They planned to spend the majority of their leisure time with their children and their husband. On the other hand, boys expected to spend some time away from their families, playing sports and socializing with their friends. But both sexes thought that they would be spending much of their leisure time watching television and being with their spouse and children.

Nearly three quarters of the girls and 64% of the boys expected to be married by the age of thirty. At that age, girls were more likely than boys to expect to have children. Boys seemed less committed to legal marriage, although most suggested that at some point in their lives (usually before the age of forty) they would marry and "settle down". For both sexes, marriage was the adult marital status, and most assumed that they would have children. Few adolescents seemed to be aware of alternative lifestyles or to see them as a desirable way to live.

Although about three quarters of the girls expressed a desire to be working for pay when they were thirty, their personal lives generally took priority over their jobs. They thought that taking time off work to raise their children could be done without financial difficulty and without jeopardizing their chances of finding another job or being promoted. Many expected to stay out of the labour force for fifteen or more years without penalty. Very few seemed to have thought about how they were going to re-enter the labour force and what preparations would be needed. Because many of their mothers stayed at home to raise them, they assumed that they would be able to do the same thing with their children. From the present high percentage of mothers with young children staying in the labour force, the expectations of our adolescent girls may be quite unrealistic.

Although one quarter of the girls and more than one third of the boys thought that housework should be shared, most of the adolescents in our study saw housework as "women's work". About one half of the boys expected their future wives to stay at home with the children while they advanced their own careers. The girls, however, were ambivalent about day care. Most of those who expected to use day care were unaware of current shortages of child care facilities. But many girls expressed a desire to stay at home with their children. They perceived housework and child care to be their **responsibility**, even though many expected their husbands to **help** them.

Girls who planned to go to university and pursue a career were more likely to expect to share the housework in the future. Having an employed mother who works in a professional position or having parents who have been divorced seemed to make both sexes more egalitarian in their attitudes towards the division of household tasks.

If an unexpected pregnancy occurred, half of the girls in the study said that they would keep the baby. Although some would marry, less than one fifth of the adolescents chose this option. Abortion was a more acceptable alternative to the girls than the boys, but only 28% of the girls would seriously consider having one. Few girls seemed to be aware of the difficulties in raising a child before they were financially established and emotionally or psychologically ready. The interviews with six teen mothers gave us a realistic indication of the problems

inherent in raising a child as an adolescent outside of marriage. These girls seem not to have been made aware of the problems until it was "too late".

The unmarried life was still the object of negative stereotypes, expecially by the women in the study. Several girls used the pejorative term "old maid", while others suggested that they would be the object of pity if they weren't married by the age of thirty-five. About 15% of the girls said that they might still be unmarried at thirty, but some of these expected to marry eventually. For most adolescents in this study, especially for the females, life without marriage and children was viewed as unattractive and empty. Work was important to assist the family finances, to afford a better standard of living, and to give their lives greater enrichment. Most girls and boys preferred to have the combination of family life and enjoyable work. Some girls **expected** that they could have both as well. Most males **assumed** that they could easily have both because males are not usually forced to make a choice between family and paid work. A few boys did suggest that they may have to make compromises in their career plans to fit in with those of their wives.

Partly because of their limited experience in life and their receptiveness to romantic portrayals of men/women, marriage, and family life in novels, magazines, and television programs, most girls in our study painted a very rosy picture of their personal lives at age thirty. They generally expected to be married to the same man, to have two normal healthy children, to live in a house they owned near their parents and siblings, and to have a loving husband with a professional job. In their leisure time, they expected to watch television, play with their children, have intimate conversations with their husband in front of the fireplace, and to travel to exotic places on their holidays. None of the girls expected to have an unemployed husband, and none who wanted to have a career anticipated anything other than minor sexual discrimination in promotion. Very few anticipated divorce. Although we would not like our young people to feel pessimistic about the future, we feel that they need to be aware of some of the possible pitfalls in order to make realistic plans.

In the final chapter, we will discuss the educational plans, aspirations for work, and the future personal lives as the adolescents see them, in the wider

context of their feasibility. Given the economic and social trends of today, are their dreams likely to be realized?

CHAPTER 5

FANTASY OR REALITY? SOME CONCLUSIONS

> "When I'm 22, I'll be married to the same boyfriend as now. We'll live in Toronto in a house . . . I'll be owning or managing a store . . ."
>
> Risa: 17 years old, Toronto

A. Introduction

What can we conclude from the activities and future plans of this sample of Canadian adolescents? We have seen that their lack of awareness of potential barriers to accomplishing their goals and of opportunities available to them has led to some very romanticized ideas about the future. At the age of fifteen, many adolescents have little knowledge of the world outside their own family and school, but by the age of nineteen they have often gained some experience in the labour force, met a wider circle of friends, and established a relationship which could lead to marriage. However, this increased knowledge and experience seems to make adolescents more traditional in their occupational choices and sometimes in their general life goals.

While increasing age may encourage more traditional planning, coming from a wealthier and more educated family seems to broaden girls' horizons with respect to occupational choice. In our study as well as in others, higher SES girls chose more demanding university courses and were more likely than lower SES adolescents to aspire to a non-traditional professional job. While lower SES girls were focusing on the "pink collar" jobs, higher SES girls were trying to move into the higher-paying professions, especially medicine and law which have been dominated by men. This indicates that the socioeconomic background of the family is still an important factor in mediating the future plans of adolescents, though there were, of course, exceptions to these patterns.

Although adolescents of both sexes often rebel against their parents' standards and values, they tend to develop similar attitudes towards education and

achievement. In our study, those adolescents with professional parents often saw their parents as positive role models and wanted to emulate them and their achievements. They were also more likely than those from lower SES families to show confidence in their ability to control the future, a confidence that will be most helpful in their planning. But the higher SES adolescents also had the financial resources to follow through with their plans without being forced to take large amounts of time from schoolwork to support themselves or contribute to their family. Generally, the lower SES adolescents believed more in fate or luck in determining the future, although there were exceptions of lower SES girls who held ambitious plans after being inspired by a woman they read about or saw on television.

The fact that such a large proportion of adolescents watched at least two hours of television a day indicates the importance of this media in socializing adolescents. From the frequency with which girls admired women in soap operas, situation comedies, and movies, we could conclude that television provides role models and expectations for adult life. Recent studies have shown that the images of women on television tend to be sexist and consumer-oriented,[1] a fact which causes grave concern for those trying to promote the full participation of women of every age in the life and work of our society. Some monitoring and eventual change of what is shown on television seems to be central in creating more positive images for girls to emulate.

If we want to assist girls to break out of the stereotype of the financially and emotionally dependent woman, we need to encourage them to create ambitious and realistic plans. These plans must not only take into consideration the present inequalities and lack of opportunities which exist for women but also try to change these circumstances for the better. Greater equality of opportunity cannot be realized until girls are aware of the stereotypic nature of their choices and of the potential pitfalls which could result from them. In the next section, we will discuss the conclusions we reached about the educational, occupational, and personal plans of adolescents and the implications of these plans for greater equality of the sexes.

B. Education

From the information gathered in the 150 interviews, we have concluded that schools are places which tend to shy away from confrontation with the controversies of the social and political world. Using the rationale that parents ought to be responsible for teaching their children certain issues, that young children should be protected from moral dilemmas, or simply that controversy is to be avoided, many schools have neglected to teach their students important information about the world. This means that adolescents are making choices about their future without knowing about the practical realities of the social, political, and economic world. Lack of attention given to social studies or economics leaves students unaware of the structure of the labour force, alternative lifestyles, or social problems which they themselves might face in the future.

Students' inadequate knowledge of the outside world can by no means be laid entirely at the door of guidance counselling. Students complained that counsellors either were not present (in rural schools), or lacked specific details of educational requirements, job opportunities, or were simply out of touch with the modern world. But adolescents need to know more than is currently available to them. They need general information about how our society works as much or more than they need mathematical skills or a knowledge of history. In order to plan for their education and future occupation, they should know about the consequences of stereotypic choices of males and females in college and university courses, about job segregation, differential pay for men and women, the changing structure of the labour force, women's "double burden" of housework and paid work, and the consequences of financial dependence for women. They need to know that women's career choices have led them to a narrower range of jobs than those available to men, with lower income, lower prestige, fewer promotional possibilities, and inadequate pensions. They need to meet women who have stepped outside the traditional job choices of teacher, nurse, clerical worker, and housewife in order to discuss with them new ways of coordinating work and family life.

Some way of countering the "hidden curriculum" at school is definitely needed. Through the hidden curriculum, adolescents learn much of what they can or cannot do in the future. For example, they see that elementary school teachers

are predominantly female, while principals are male. The farther they go in school, the fewer women there are to teach them (if they are in a public school). Among their peers, the "attractive" and "fashionable" girl may get more attention from the opposite sex than the "smart" one. They see that boys play hockey and football, while girls play hopscotch, sing in the choir, and become the cheerleaders for boys' sports activities.

Studies have also indicated that high school teachers and counsellors unwittingly give girls the impression than they are less important students than the boys. Teachers look at boys more when they teach, give them more occupational advice, and assume that they are more intelligent and committed.[2]

Adolescents are not explicitly aware of the lessons in the hidden curriculum but they learn them just the same. They soon learn that although our society does not legally prevent women from getting as much education as men or from striving for high-level careers, girls are **expected** to be interested in different things. Relationships and family life are still viewed as more important for women than a paid career.

However, attitudes on women and work are in a state of flux. Although social and economic barriers still exist to prevent women's equality with men, some girls think that all the barriers have been removed and that no obstacles will intrude upon their futures. But internal barriers persist and many girls still **want** a very similar life to their mothers' and are expected to put their family life first.

No one can object to young women having this as a desire or a goal. The problems arise in the fact that in a rapidly changing society the worker who does not have her own means of support or training to do so can be in a very precarious economic or social situation if her husband's work changes, the marriage dissolves, etc. And since full-time child-rearing takes her up to about forty years of age – what then?

The adolescents we interviewed did show some recognition of these changing times in that they expected to be highly educated and to work for pay. This **is** a major change. However, they often do not realize that they are making

stereotyped educational choices which will put them in the poor working conditions of most females in this country. The realities of women's adult lives should be included in school curricula along with potential solutions to these inequalities. Lack of awareness of these issues will lead to a continuation of women's lower status in the labour force, in the family, and in the society as a whole.

C. Work

In deciding about a future job, several factors limit adolescents' choices. Competition to get into university, high unemployment rates, and lack of money were recognized by many adolescents in our study as potential problems. However, fewer were aware of the limitations imposed by sex role stereotyping in occupational choice. Although males and females were equally likely to want to continue their education beyond high school, females made their occupational choices within a narrower range of jobs. These choices tend to relegate women to lower paid and unpaid jobs and to continue their financial dependence on men and government assistance.

Despite the generally traditional occupational choices of the girls in the study, about 20% mentioned the wish to pursue occupations considered atypical for women such as doctor, lawyer, veterinarian, university professor, and diplomat. Girls who made such suggestions were not always as confident that they would achieve their occupational goals as the boys were, and were not always aware of the qualifications needed. But some were knowledgeable about the requirements and determined to follow through with their ambition. Girls who chose atypical occupations tended to be younger than the rest and generally came from wealthier and more educated families. No girls from lower SES families suggested skilled labour or technical positions which some of their parents performed (except a desire to work with computers). In general, awareness of skilled or technical jobs seems to be low among adolescent girls, and it rarely was work they saw themselves doing in the future.

Although the boys in our study mentioned proportionally more jobs than the girls did, none of them chose occupations usually dominated by women. Both

sexes seem to be bound by the traditional stereotypes about gender and work. However, women seem to be breaking out of this pattern more than are. Men have little incentive to try to enter women's lower paid jobs. Until those jobs traditionally done by women rise in pay and status, few men will want to do them and women will not receive the benefits they should from this work. However, these remain crucial jobs for our society. They must be done, but not at the economic and social expense of those who do them.

In discussing their paid work, most of the girls emphasized those aspects of the job traditionally valued by women. For example, many wanted to help people or work with children. They preferred to work with people rather than ideas or things. They wanted interesting work more than prestigious or high-paying positions. Girls seemed to be less concerned than boys about advancement or managerial positions. Although they expressed a desire to be rich, they were less likely than boys to feel that they could get this wealth through their paid work. Like the boys, they hoped to win the lottery. But unlike the boys, they also expressed a desire to marry a rich person. If we could encourage girls to aspire to jobs with greater promotional possibilities and if they were more aware of the consequences of lower paying positions, they could become more financially independent while retaining the intrinsic rewards of their work.

Despite the rising proportions of part-time workers in the Canadian labour force, only 8% of the adolescents in our study expected to be working part time at the age of thirty. Most of these were girls who planned to be home with their young children. When their children entered school, they wanted to return to the full-time labour force. Although most girls did not choose to work part time, those who did seemed to be unaware of the lower fringe benefits and pay usually associated with part-time work. Unless employers are forced to offer prorated benefits for part-time work, many married women will be financially disadvantaged in the future and this knowledge should be made available to young women. Their families, schools, and community groups could all play a role in heightening this awareness.

Although full-time work was preferred by those who expected to be working for pay, some girls assumed that they could easily enrol their child in a day

care centre, persuade their mother to care for the child, or hire a baby-sitter to come to their home. Other girls were aware of the potential problems the two-earner family has finding suitable child care. Unless subsidized child care spaces are increased, the larger proportion of women expecting to be in the labour force in ten years will put even more severe strain on already overtaxed facilities. Women will have to either rely on private arrangements, reduce their time in the paid labour force, or share the job of caring for children with their husbands. The last possibility seems quite unlikely, given men's work patterns and the continuation of traditional male attitudes towards the sharing of child care. With increasing rates of divorce, even more mothers will have to work for pay in the future and will require reliable and inexpensive child care.

Although 30% of the girls in our study said that they would be looking after their own children at the age of thirty, few seemed to think that economic necessity may force them into paid work when their children are pre-schoolers. Rather than assuming that working for pay is a matter of choice, girls should be advised that the majority of adult women work out of financial necessity and that financial dependence can lead to psychological dependence. If the marriage breaks up, reliance on government assistance may be the only alternative.

The ideas held by the boys in the study about the demands of the work force are more congruent with what is actually likely to happen to them in the labour force. While the boys expected that they would be working all day (only one speculated about unemployment and one about working part time), many of the girls tended to think that their employers would provide them with flexibility to suit their family needs. For example, many girls expected to move in and out of the labour force at will and without penalty. Others anticipated that raising children and carrying on a demanding career would not be difficult. Realistic information about the structure and demands of the labour force is definitely needed by high school girls. But the structure of the labour force will have to be changed if it is to be more flexible for working parents.

While some of the adolescent girls had some awareness of job discrimination against women in the workplace, few felt that this would hold them back in either finding work or getting promoted. In fact, some girls who had heard

about sexism or discrimination on the job were not convinced that it happened at all. Other girls were very aware and angry about discrimination against women on the workplace, but thought that they could individually combat it. The younger students seemed less aware of its existence and were also more likely to choose jobs usually done by men.

It could be suggested that knowledge of discrimination would discourage girls from trying for atypical jobs. However, without accurate knowledge of the work world, realistic decisions cannot be made. If we can provide girls with the knowledge of discrimination and the motivation and suggested methods to counteract and change it, this dilemma may be partially resolved. But governments and employers need to work much harder to eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace.

As the cost of schooling rises and the need for more education increases, financing a university education is becoming more difficult. Part-time jobs, work-study programs, and help in finding employment will become a crucial part of most students' school-based needs. Since the lower SES students, regardless of ability, drop out of school first, new programs are needed to provide financial assistance to those from lower SES families. Girls, in particular, need to be encouraged to stay in school long enough to qualify for some form of higher education or job training. From interviewing the high school drop-outs, we see that the jobs they can find (when they can find anything) do not provide enough income to live on. Those girls who are already mothers especially need money, child care, and counselling to help them return to school, care for their children, and re-enter the labour force when required.

Most of the young people interviewed saw a close link between higher education and professional employment. Although young people can no longer be sure that they all will find employment at the end of their studies, the adolescents in our project had strong intentions of going to college or university. But many were unrealistic in their expectations of finding a job right after graduation in their field and in their home town. Females were more likely than males to be unwilling to move from home to seek employment or a promotion, but while jobs are scarce this becomes more of a necessity, for women as well as men.

D. Personal Lives

Most adolescents of both sexes in our project were committed to family life, despite the rising divorce rates and declining birth rates. They turned to their mothers and fathers for advice on their education, future jobs, and personal problems, and often used their parents as role models. Some named their parents as people they most admired. Others tried to think of what their mother did during the day when they imagined themselves at the age of thirty. While some adolescents were determined **not** to end up like their parents, their parents' behaviour nevertheless became the model upon which they patterned projected behaviour. Most followed their parents' standards of behaviour rather closely, or at least expressed a desire not to displease them.

Despite the fact that most girls in the study did not want to be housewives, as most of their mothers had been until recently, they expected to combine paid work and housework. But in their personal diaries at thirty years old, it became apparent that they saw housework as the major responsibility of the **wife**. Other studies have also concluded that males express more liberal attitudes than females do about sharing the housework.[3] However, there seems to be a discrepancy between what boys **say** they will do and what men **actually** do around the house. Several studies have concluded that husbands rarely share the responsibility for housework when their wives work for pay, and that husbands often feel that they do more housework than they are reported by their wives to be doing.[4] If girls truly want equality in the workplace, they cannot also be expected to carry the burden of the vast majority of household tasks. If they do, they are unlikely to have the energy or time for a paid "career" as opposed to a "job". But if they want to have an equal division of labour, they will have to be prepared to fight against prevailing attitudes of housework as women's work, attitudes which are often uncritically accepted by women.

Although both sexes expected to be involved in family-related activities at the age of thirty, girls placed a higher priority on family life. Lower SES girls in particular planned to marry and produce children in their early twenties, while higher SES girls expected to postpone marriage and child-bearing until their education was completed. Boys expected to marry later, especially those aspiring

to professional careers, and assumed that they would spend more time than girls with their friends or involved in sport activities. Few boys saw themselves doing housework in the evenings.

A few girls who stated that they didn't want to marry said that they wanted to have children without a husband. Evidently, it was difficult or impossible for them to have a clear awareness of the difficulties, either financial or psychological, of single-parenting. Those who came from one-parent households were more open to the idea of being a single parent themselves. But they saw it as a **choice**, rather than an unplanned or very difficult event. Single-parenting and the social and economic consequences of divorce could be discussed in the school curriculum. This would give adolescents a more realistic idea of how they could avoid some of the problems if this should happen to them.

It was clear from our study that adolescents learn more through personal experience than through reading books or being told something. In our study, adolescents who had experienced life in a one-parent home seemed to feel that marriage and a traditional division of labour were not the only ways of organizing their personal life; other ways existed as well. Going through the divorce experience tended to sensitize these adolescents to the frailty of marriage, the dangers of focusing life around one person, the necessity for women to be self-supporting, and the desirability of sharing housework between husband and wife. Although most social workers and researchers have focused on the negative impact of parental divorce on children, our study indicates that it can also be a broadening experience.

Similarly, the experience of having a mother who returned to school or work after being a housewife for many years, or a mother who was committed to a career in the paid labour force encouraged the girls to see a more expansive role for themselves as adults. The combination of paid work and family life was viewed as possible and also desirable. Adolescents with mothers in the labour force participated more in housework and household decision making, and also held more egalitarian views on the division of labour in their future homes.

Although adolescents are somewhat limited by their parents' educational and occupational achievements and by sex-role expectations, their personal experiences can modify these influences and allow them to see alternatives for their lives. Through information they learn at school, books they read, people they meet or television programs they watch, they can be stimulated to expand their lives or change traditional behaviour. Although they may hear about inequality in the labour force, poverty among women, or rising divorce rates, they can easily ignore these messages unless they are personally touched in some way. Adolescents who personally experience unanticipated pregnancy, parental divorce, unemployment in the family or maternal employment may be changed by that experience and be more cautious, realistic, or determined in their planning for the future. But those who have not lived through these events can be made more aware of the impact of these social issues through discussion or debate with other students, and through meeting people of both sexes who have chosen non-traditional careers or lifestyles. This would provide adolescents with a greater range of alternatives when deciding on their future.

E. Conclusion

After interviewing 150 adolescents, we found that many held notions of the future that did not tally with the likely outcome of their adult lives. In the eyes of many of these adolescents, there is no unemployment in their future, no divorce, and no poverty. Only interesting jobs, adequate incomes, loving husbands, trouble-free children, home ownership, and international travel were on their horizons. Although adolescents are aware on an **intellectual** level that world peace is in jeopardy, families are breaking up, and many people are living in poverty, they tend to **feel** that they are immune to these external forces.

We need to search for more effective ways of sensitizing these young people to the realities of the future without dampening their spirits or lowering their aspirations. Certainly young women need a greater awareness of the present realities of women in the workplace, the potential impact of microtechnology on women's jobs, the difficulties of raising children as a single parent, and on the increasing need for two incomes in the family. Only with valid information on how

the world works can adolescents be expected to make realistic decisions. The romanticized versions of the future we received in the interviews are partly a factor of the adolescents' inexperience in the world. But they can also be blamed on the lack of time and energy that our society as a whole – parents, schools, media, community groups, and all levels of government – puts into preparing our young women to lead secure, fulfilled lives as adults in Canadian society. This must be changed.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. Canada, Statistics Canada, **Education in Canada: A Statistical Review for 1982-1983** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, June 1984), catalogue no. 81-229, tables 2-6, pp. 58-64.

2. D.C. McKie, B. Prentice, and P. Reed (Statistics Canada), **Divorce: Law and the Family in Canada** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1983).

3. Gloria Geller, **Role Aspirations and Life-style Orientations of High School Women**, Masters Thesis, University of Toronto, 1973; Gloria Geller, "Aspirations of Adult Women", paper presented at the Canadian Women's Studies' Annual Meeting, Guelph, 1984; Avis Glaze, **Factors Which Influence Career Choice and Future Orientations of Females: Implications for Career Education**, Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto, 1979; Pauline Fahmy-Pomerleau, **Aspirations prédominantes et aspirations professionnelles d'adolescentes québécoises**, Doctoral Thesis, Laval University, 1974; Pauline Fahmy-Pomerleau, "Égalité et dépendance ou l'impossible aspiration des adolescentes", in **Femmes et Politiques**, Collection Idéelles, ed. Yolande Cohen, Le Jour, 1981.

4. This was implied in Gloria Geller's paper "Aspirations of Adult Women", presented at the Canadian Women's Studies' Annual Meeting, Guelph, 1984; but see also Anne-Marie Ambert, **Sex Structure**, 2nd edition (Toronto: Longman Canada, 1976), p. 78.

5. Ambert, p. 76; Science Council of Canada, **The Science Education of Women: a Statement of Concern** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1982).

6. Science Council of Canada.

7. Ambert, p. 76; S.S. Tangri, **Role-Innovation in Occupational Choice Among College Women**, Doctoral Thesis, University of Michigan, 1969.

8. Canada, National Council of Welfare, **Sixty-five and Older – A Report by the National Council of Welfare on the Incomes of the Aged** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, February 1984), pp. 25-35, 39.

9. In the futures diary approach, subjects are asked to write (or relate verbally) what they think they will be doing in the future. While some researchers have made this a very general question, others have focused on a specific age or time in their life. We asked for a "typical weekday" when they were thirty years old. The futures diary approach has also been used in previous Canadian studies by Gloria Geller (1973) and Fahmy-Pomerleau (1974 and 1981).

10. Both figures are for median income. Canada, Statistics Canada, **Income Distribution by Size in Canada** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, September 1984), table 1, catalogue no. 13-206, p. 17 (based on preliminary data).

CHAPTER 2

1. Canada, Statistics Canada, **Perspectives Canada III,** H.J. Adler and D.A. Brusegard, eds. (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, April 1980), catalogue no. 11-511, table 5:11, p. 91.

2. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, **Education and Work. The Views of the Young** (Paris: OECD, 1983), p. 43.

3. Anne-Marie Ambert, **Sex Structure,** 2nd edition (Toronto: Longman Canada, 1976), p. 98.

4. Ibid.

5. Canada, Statistics Canada, **The Labour Force** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, May 1984), catalogue no. 71-001, table 10, p. 35.

6. Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella, **Equality in Employment. A Royal Commission Report** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, October 1984).

7. Jane Gaskell and Marvin Lazerson, "Between School and Work: Perspectives of Working Class Youth", **Interchange,** vol. II, no. 3 (1980-81); OECD, p. 24.

8. OECD, p. 24.

9. Pat McNenly, "Profession has no jobs for 2 of 5 new lawyers, half of new engineers", **The Toronto Star,** June 21, 1984.

10. Canada, Statistics Canada, **The Labour Force,** p. 35.

11. Science Council of Canada, **Who Turns the Wheel? Proceedings of a Workshop on the Science Education of Women in Canada** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1982).

12. Canada, Statistics Canada, **Education in Canada: A Statistical Review for 1982-83** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, June 1984), catalogue no. 81-229, pp. 108-110.

13. Ibid., pp. 59-60.

14. Canada, Statistics Canada, **The Labour Force,** p. 35.

15. A.V. Cicourel and J.I. Kitsuse, **The Educational Decision-Makers** (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1963); W.B.W. Martin and Allan K.J. Macdonell, **Canadian Education. A Sociological Analysis** (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1982).

16. OECD, p. 53.

17. Rona Maynard, "Why Can't We Give High-School Girls The Career Guidance They Need?", **Chatelaine** (October 1983), p. 77+.

18. D. William Wood and Sandy Nuttall, "Single Adolescent Mothers: the Dimensions of Unscheduled Parenting in Ontario", presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association, Guelph, June 1984.

19. C.F. Grindstaff, "Long Term Economic Consequences of Adolescent Marriage and Fertility", presented at a Conference on Women and Demography, sponsored by Statistics Canada and Status of Women Canada, Ottawa, July 1984.

20. OECD, p. 43.

21. Gail C.A. Cook, ed., **Opportunity for Choice. A Goal for Women in Canada** (Ottawa: Statistics Canada in association with the C.D. Howe Institute, 1976), table 4.10, p. 125.

22. Canada, Statistics Canada, **Perspectives Canada III**, pp. 78-79.

23. Fahmy-Pomerleau, **Aspirations prédominantes et aspirations professionnelles d'adolescentes québécoises**, Doctoral Thesis, Laval University, 1974.

24. Alexander Himmelfarb and C. James Richardson, **People, Power and Process. Sociology for Canadians** (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979), p. 211.

25. John Porter, **The Vertical Mosaic** (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965); Adler and Brusegard, p. 105; Raymond N. Morris and C. Michael Lanphier, **Three Scales of Inequality. Perspectives on French-English Relations** (Toronto: Longman, 1977).

26. OECD.

27. Wood and Nuttall.

28. For example, illegitimate births per 100 live births were 72.1 in Barbados (1978) and 43.7 in Trinidad and Tobago (1977) compared to 17.1 in the United States (1979) and 12.1 in Canada (1973). (Canada stopped recording these figures when the concept of "illegitimacy" was removed from the law.) United Nations, **Demographic Yearbook 1981**, New York, 1983.

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1. Susan Clark and Marylee Stephenson, "Housework as Real Work", in **Work in the Canadian Context: Continuity Despite Change**, eds. Katherina L.P. Lundy and Barbara D. Warme (Toronto: Butterworths, 1981), pp. 67, 73-92.

2. Lorne Tepperman, **Social Mobility in Canada** (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1975), p. 169.

3. Merlin B. Brinkerhoff and Eugen Lupri, "Conjugal Power and Family Relationships: Some Theoretical and Methodological Issues", in **The Canadian Family**, ed. K. Ishwaran (Toronto: Gage, 1983), p. 214.

4. Canada, Statistics Canada, **Charting Canadian Incomes 1951-81** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, March 1984), catalogue no. 13-581E, p. 11.

5. Margrit Eichler, **Families in Canada Today** (Toronto: Gage, 1983), p. 45.

6. See: Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, **The Double Ghetto. Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work** (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978); Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, **A Working Majority: What Women Must Do For Pay** (Ottawa: Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1983); and Louise Kapp Howe, **Pink Collar Workers: Inside the World of Women's Work** (New York: Avon Books, 1977).

7. Canada, Labour Canada, Task Force on Micro-Electronics and Employment, **In the Chips: Opportunities, People, Partnerships** (Ottawa: Labour Canada, 1982); and Heather Menzies, **Women and the Chip** (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1982).

8. Ronald J. Burke, **Economic Recession and the Quality of Education: Some Threatening Trends** (Toronto: York University, Faculty of Administrative Studies, March 1984).

9. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, **Education and Work. The Views of the Young** (Paris: OECD, 1983), p. 68.

10. Burke.

11. OECD, p. 43.

12. Ibid., p. 74-78.

13. Eichler, p. 170.

14. Canada, Statistics Canada, **Charting Canadian Incomes 1951-1981**, p. 11.

15. Armstrong and Armstrong, **A Working Majority: What Women Must Do For Pay**, table 5, p. 252.

16. A study done for the Toronto Board of Education by Sylvia Larter and John Fitzgerald ("Students' Attitudes to Work and Unemployment", Part III, no. 153, March 1979, p. 28) found that 10% of the girls in their sample expected to have non-traditional jobs at age thirty.

17. Meredith Rimball, **"Women and Success: a Basic Conflict?"** in **Women in Canada**, ed. Marylee Stephenson (Toronto: New Press, 1973), pp. 119-135; Fahmy-Pomerleau, 1974; S. Tangri, **Role-Innovation in Occupational Choice Among College Women**, Doctoral Thesis, University of Michigan, 1969; and Matina Horner, "The Motive to Avoid Success and Changing Aspirations of College Women", in **Readings on the Psychology of Women**, ed. Judith Bardwick (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), pp. 62-67.

18. The term "pseudo-career" was used by Lys Sayer, counselling psychologist, to describe the unrealistic career projections of adolescent women. See: "The

Orientation of Adolescent Women Toward The Future" by Heather Berkeley (a background paper for the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women), March 1983, p. 34.

19. Gloria Geller, "Aspirations of Female High School Students", **Resources for Feminist Research**, vol. 13, no. 1 (March 1984), p. 18.

20. Horner, pp. 62-67.

CHAPTER 4

1. For example, see: Pat Armstrong and Hugh Armstrong, **The Double Ghetto. Canadian Women and Their Segregated Work** (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978).

2. Martin Meissner, E.W. Humphreys, S.M. Meiss, and W.J. Scheu, "No Exit for Wives: Sexual Division of Labour and the Cumulation of Household Demands", **Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology**, vol. 12, Part 1 (1975), pp. 424-439; Susan Clark and Andrew Harvey, "The Sexual Division of Labour: The Use of Time", **Atlantis**, vol. 2, no. 1 (Fall 1976), pp. 46-66.

3. Sue J. Wilson, "Non-traditional Living Arrangements", in **The Family. Changing Trends in Canada**, ed. Maureen Baker (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1984), p. 207.

4. Warren E. Kalbach and Wayne W. McVey, **The Demographic Basis of Canadian Society**, 2nd edition (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1979).

5. Wilson.

6. Margrit Eichler, **Families in Canada Today** (Toronto: Gage, 1983), p. 47.

7. Ibid., p. 92.

8. Canada, Statistics Canada, **Nuptiality and Fertility** (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, August 1983), catalogue no. 92-906, vol. I, table 2. (This percentage is for women over forty-five years of age.)

9. Jean E. Veevers, **Childless by Choice** (Toronto: Butterworths, 1980).

10. C. Grindstaff, "Long Term Economic Consequences of Adolescent Marriage and Fertility", presented at a Conference on Women and Demography, sponsored by Status of Women Canada and Statistics Canada, Ottawa, July 4, 1984.

11. Ibid.

12. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, **Education and Work. The Views of the Young** (Paris: OECD, 1983), p. 18.

13. Meissner et al., 1975; Clark and Harvey, 1976.

14. The reason for the adolescents in Ottawa being more open to living in other parts of the country is probably related to their higher socioeconomic background, as well as to the fact that many of their families had moved more frequently than others.

CHAPTER 5

1. Margrit Eichler, **Families in Canada Today** (Toronto: Gage, 1983), p. 267.

2. Susan Russell, "Learning Sex Roles in High School", **Interchange**, vol. 10, no. 2 (1979-80), pp. 57-66; Anne-Marie Ambert, **Sex Structure**, 2nd edition (Toronto: Longman Canada, 1976), p. 75.

3. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Centre for Research and Innovation, **Education and Work. The Views of the Young** (Paris: OECD, 1983), p. 18.

4. Martin Meissner, E.W. Humphreys, S.M. Meiss, and W.J. Scheu, "No Exit for Wives: Sexual Division of Labour and the Cumulation of Household Demands", **Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology**, vol. 12, Part 1 (1975), pp. 424-439; Susan Clark and Andrew Harvey, "The Sexual Division of Labour: The Use of Time", **Atlantis**, vol. 2, no. 1 (Fall 1976), pp. 46-66; Meg Luxton, **More Than a Labour of Love: Three Generations of Women's Work in the Home** (Toronto: Women's Educational Press, 1980).

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